

Sketching the Identity Negotiations of Male Athletes and their Coaches:

A Case Study of a CIS Men's Basketball Team

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Abstract

More than simply passive members of a hard masculine cult, male athletes and their coaches take up complex and contradictory identities within the larger athletic structures in which they operate. In this study, I explore the relations of power shaping identity and subjectivity for male athletes and their coaches. Interviews were conducted with eight key informants, six student-athletes and two coaches, of a Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) men's basketball team and focused on sketching their experiences, perceptions, and performances of masculinities in the sport arena. The detailed stories shared by the two coaches led me to focus two analysis chapters on their narratives. My third analysis chapter broadens to include the narratives told by the larger group of participants. Drawing on the work of Foucault and feminist post-structuralist analysis, I problematize the ethical subjectivities of coaches and players and consider the implications of these findings for both critical sport researchers and anti-violence activists.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

As an anti-violence activist, I coordinate the Male Allies program run by the Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region (SASC). In this position, I work to engage men and boys in conversations designed to reframe gender-based violence as a men's issue. In my three years at SASC, I have led over three hundred workshops with close to eight thousand men and boys. While the volume of my activist work surprises some people, the reality is, I am surprised by fact that I became an activist at all. It has been quite a remarkable journey -- and one that I would not have predicted for myself just six years ago.

My interest in engaging men and boys in ending gender-based violence stems from a course on contemporary feminist research methods taught by Dr. Francis, which I took as a second-year undergraduate student at Brock University. For the final paper, we were asked to unpack "interlocking forms of power" in our lives. As the only male-identified student in the class, I remember feeling perplexed by this request. I met with Dr. Francis to explain my concerns, "when I look in the mirror, I see a human being. I'm universally generalizable. As a middle-class White man, I have no class, no race, and no gender. I'm the generic person!" (Kimmel, 2005, p. 5). In other words, I had not previously considered the personal impact of dominant discourses related to class, race, and gender. Kimmel (2005) has referred to this as the privilege of invisibility. Ever supportive, Dr. Francis challenged me to make the invisible visible.

Using an approach to the autoethnographic research method similar to Berry (2007) and Tillman (2009), I used personal narratives to connect my lived experience as a

heterosexual White male youth from rural Northern Ontario to broader socio-cultural experiences of men. In doing so, I realized, for the first time, that my lifelong struggle to perform an accepted version of masculinity was not unique. A symptom of the contradictory and complex nature of masculinity, I began to understand that many men struggle to be seen as a “real man.” And, as I also learned, it is this struggle that leads some men to commit violence against women, other men, and oneself (Kaufman, 1987). The overwhelming sense of agency that I derived from sketching out the larger scripts that I had unknowingly been performing, combined with a desire to end gender-based violence, inspired me to help other men achieve similar “ah-ha” moments. Over the next two years, I helped to develop and coordinate the Men Against Rape and Sexual Assault (MARS) initiative at Brock. The MARS initiative was a male-led peer-to-peer anti-violence initiative, which held workshops and trainings designed to encourage men to challenge the rape culture on campus.

During this period, the prevalence of gender-based violence on Canadian post-secondary campuses became a growing concern. The Ontario Women’s Directorate (2013), for example, created a resource guide for administrators at Ontario’s colleges and universities, which sketches appropriate institutional responses to sexual violence. Similarly, the Canadian Federation of Students -- Ontario (2013) designed a toolkit for students attempting to combat sexual violence on Canadian post-secondary campuses. For my fourth-year honours thesis, concerned by this campus climate, I returned to the autoethnographic research method and, once again, used personal narratives to unpack my experiences as coordinator of the MARS initiative. This research project called

attention to the possibilities and limitations of male-led peer-to-peer anti-violence initiatives on Canadian post-secondary campuses.

After graduating, I entered the Master of Arts (MA) in Critical Sociology program at Brock. In choosing to remain in academia, I hoped to design a research project that could advance the efforts of initiatives similar to MARS. Indeed, as coordinator of the MARS initiative, I had helped to organize several events that failed to mobilize the male student body at Brock. In this sense, I became interested in exploring new ways for initiatives like MARS to reach a broader demographic of men on Canadian post-secondary campuses. As I began to think about possible research questions, I became aware of several highly publicized sexual assaults cases involving male student-athletes at Canadian post-secondary institutions -- including Brock.¹

In surveying the literature, I found that the connection between male student-athletes and sexual assault was well documented (Crosset, Ptacek, McDonald, & Benedict, 1996; Gage, 2008; Adams-Curtis & Forbes, 2004; Stotzer & MacCartney, 2015; Pappas, McKenry, & Catlett, 2004; Boeringer, 1999; Humphrey & Kahn, 2000; McMahon, 2007; Melnick, 1992; Martin, 2016). While the measures of these studies vary widely, there seemed to be a consensus that male student-athletes, especially those on team sports, “have a greater propensity for violence against women than other men” (Flood & Dyson, 2004, p. 37). Given the social capital afforded to male student-athletes on Canadian post-secondary campuses, I became interested in exploring new ways to

¹ <http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/2012/10/23/jury-finds-yetman-guilty-of-sexual-assaults>

engage these men as leaders in ending gender-based violence. In this context, my initial research questions were:

1. What is the relationship between team sports, discursive constructions of dominant masculinities, and gender-based violence?
2. How do male student-athletes experience, perceive, and perform masculinities?
3. Using the data gathered, what would appropriate anti-violence programming designed to engage male student-athletes look like?

Hence, I did not set out to interview male student-athletes from a specific team sport. Instead, to begin the participant recruitment process, I contacted various head coaches for men's teams at Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) member institutions located across southern Ontario.

On 29 August 2013, I met with Brian Johnson, head coach for the University of Southern Ontario (USO) men's basketball team, to discuss the purpose of this research project. After a brief discussion, Brian shared that he had recently been hired by the USO and was interested in "changing the culture" of the team. I later learned that Brian had been in his position for less than a month at the time of our initial meeting. Despite this, Brian articulated strong support for my prior anti-violence work and offered to help me find participants for this research project. True to his word, Brian eventually sent me a list containing the contact information for six players on his team, all of who eventually agreed to participate in this research project. My focus on basketball in this research

project, then, emerged simply because Brian was one of the first head coaches to respond to my meeting request.

After completing the first interview, I decided to stop by Brian's office to update him on my progress and thank him for his assistance. It was at this point that this research project took an unexpected turn. On arrival, Brian and his assistant coach, Stuart, greeted me. Without hesitation, Brian asked me to come in and motioned for me to take a seat next to Stuart. Given their status as gatekeepers, I felt compelled to accommodate this request – but was also concerned that I might be asked to break confidentiality about one of their players. Over the next thirty minutes, however, the three of us discussed a wide range of topics from politics to the benefits of meditation. To my surprise, I was not once asked about this research project. On leaving Brian's office, I remember feeling overwhelmed by their apparent openness towards me.

After each subsequent interview, I made a habit of stopping by Brian's office. Invariably, I would find Brian and Stuart engaged in discussion – just as I had after the first interview. And, just as he had after the first interview, Brian would usually ask me to come in and motion for me to take a seat next to Stuart. The stories shared in these impromptu discussions helped me to realize that Brian and Stuart were more than simply gatekeepers -- they were also key informants. After completing the interview process with their players, and consulting with Dr. Francis, I decided to ask both coaches to participate in this research project.

As my initial research questions highlight, I did not set out to interview coaches. At that time, simply put, I did not know coaches. I knew student-athletes. I was the same

age as them, I took classes with them, and I was friends with them. As a novice researcher, I felt that these shared demographics and social ties would more easily allow me to help facilitate the construction of thick narratives. And, as previously noted, I had entered graduate school with the intention of advancing the efforts of initiatives like MARS. Hence, focusing on student-athletes made sense – both practically and theoretically. Why, then, did I choose to interview the coaches? As key informants, I hoped to use the narratives told by Brian and Stuart to make sense of the narratives told by their players. More importantly, I hoped that their narratives could provide unique insights into working with male student-athletes as leaders in ending gender-based violence.

Unexpectedly, however, the narratives told by Brian and Stuart led to a shift in my research questions. In transcribing their narratives, I was forced to consider the complex agencies of coaches and relations of power that direct traditional coaching practices. To theorize their narratives, I returned to the literature and discovered an emerging group of critical sport researchers drawing on Foucault to problematize the ethical subjectivities of coaches (Denison, 2007; Burke & Hallinan, 2006; Mills & Denison, 2013). Through engaging with this literature, I found Foucault's work, especially his ideas on discourse and discipline, to be ripe with new ways to think critically about sport.

Due to the centrality of heteronormativity in many sporting cultures, Foucauldian critical sport researchers have most often focused their analyses on the identity negotiations of female and lesbian-identified coaches (Kauer, 2009; Norman, 2013).

Given the narratives told by Brian and Stuart, however, I felt compelled to call attention to the identity negotiations of male and heterosexual-identified coaches – especially those that are also racialized. Hence, my revised research questions are:

1. What is the relationship between sport, discursive constructions of dominant masculinities, and gender-based violence?
2. How do male student-athletes and their coaches experience, perceive, and perform masculinities?
3. What are the implications of this research for developing anti-violence programming designed to engage both male student-athletes and their coaches?

To address these questions, I start with a brief overview of the history of basketball to show how the creation and promotion of this sport has been shaped by racial and class politics which continue to reverberate in the contemporary period. Next I provide a review of the critical sport literature that informed the eventual direction of this research project and an overview of my Foucauldian and feminist post-structuralist theoretical framework. In chapter four, I sketch my decision to use narrative analysis as my methodology -- including how it articulates, ontologically, with my theoretical framework. In addition, I discuss the recruitment process; demographics of participants; the research design; the potentials and limitations of insider status; the power dynamics involved in conducting the interviews, ethics and epistemic responsibility.

In chapters five and six, given the detailed stories shared by the coaches for the USO men's basketball team, I chose to focus my analysis on the narratives told by Stuart

and Brian, respectively. In chapter five, I foreground the narrative of what I call embodied complicity told by Stuart. In chapter six, I centre the narrative of what I call aspirational resistance told by Brian. In chapter seven, I expand my analysis to the larger group of participants and unpack the narratives of what I call active docility told by the student-athletes in this research project. This chapter explores some of the relations of power that direct male athletes to operate as docile agents in the sport arena and some of the ways in which the student-athletes in this research project actively negotiate their feelings of ambivalence towards team norms. To conclude, I reflect on these narratives and consider the implications of the findings from this research project for both critical sport researchers and anti-violence activists.

Chapter 2: A Critical Analysis of Basketball and its Historical Intersection with Broader Vectors of Power

In this chapter, I sketch the development of basketball in both Canada and the US. Within the contemporary White imaginary, basketball has become coded as an inherently Black practice. Basketball and the corresponding ability to put a ball through a hoop, however, have no natural connection to Blackness. Instead, a historical analysis reveals that basketball has a natural connection to the spatial and structural constraints of the industrialized city. In this context, I will explore the development of basketball in the US and highlight its historical intersection with broader vectors of power. To conclude, I take up a critical analysis of the racist discourse that produces basketball as a legitimate path to upward social mobility for Black men in contemporary American society.

A Social Gospel Sport

Basketball was initially constructed as a social gospel sport. During the late-19th century, the social gospel movement developed within the Protestant Church as an attempt to address the social ills brought about by the Industrial Revolution. The Protestant urban reformers who promoted the social gospel message through sport were dubbed Muscular Christians. These middle-class White men believed that sport, then thought to be a “tool of the devil” by many Christians, could be a space to produce men with Christian values (Rains, 2011, p. 20). Although this movement was active in both the United States (US) and Canada, it became much more ingrained in the fabric of early Canadian sporting cultures. Indeed, while early US sporting cultures focused on professionalism and profit, early Canadian sporting cultures focused on amateurism and

the “making of men” (Kidd, 1996, p. 46). One of the most famous Muscular Christians is the inventor of basketball, James Naismith.

Born in Almonte, Ontario in 1861, Naismith became interested in combining sport and Christianity as a student-athlete at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec. In 1888, after graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Physical Education, Naismith entered the Presbyterian College in Montreal. Although Naismith graduated from the seminary two years later, his passion for sport led him to reject church ministry:

My attention was directed to the fact that there were other ways of influencing young people than preaching. In games it was easily seen that the man who took his part in a manly way and yet kept his thoughts and conduct clean had the respect of the most careless. It was a short step to the conclusion that hard clean athletics could be used to set a high standard of living for the young. (Rains, 2011, p. 26)

In 1890, Naismith entered the International YMCA Training School (now Springfield College) in Springfield, Massachusetts. After graduating from the two-year program in only one year, Naismith was offered a teaching position in the physical education department. In 1891, during his first year of teaching at Springfield College, Naismith invented the game of basketball.

Michael Zorge, a professor at the University of Kansas -- where Naismith eventually taught -- recently discovered the only known audio recording of Naismith. This recording is from the 31 January 1939 broadcast of the radio program *We the*

People, which was hosted by Gabriel Heatter. In discussion with Heatter, Naismith discussed the origins of basketball:

It was in the winter of 1891, when I was Physical Instructor at Springfield College in Massachusetts. We had a real New England blizzard. For days the students could not go outdoors, so they began roughhousing in the halls. We tried everything to keep them quiet. We tried playing a modified form of football in the gymnasium, but they got bored with that. Something had to be done. One day I had an idea. I called the boys to the gym. Divided them up into teams of nine and gave them an old soccer ball. I showed them two peach baskets I'd nailed up at each end of the gym, and I told them the idea was to throw the ball into the opposing team's peach basket. I blew a whistle, and the first game of basketball began.

This first game was a success; Naismith's experiment quickly became popular amongst the boys at Springfield College. In 1892, the thirteen original rules were published in an article in the school newspaper, *The Triangle*. To conclude this article, Naismith (1892) remarked:

It is well suited for boys ... it is intended that this game should be free from much of the reputed roughness of Rugby, and in the framing of rules this has been kept strictly in view. If some of the rules seem unnecessarily severe, it will be remembered that the time to stop roughness is before it begins ... It is for the benefit of a physical director that no man be hurt in his gymnasium, so that any director who tries it should make every man conform to the rules strictly at first,

and then he would soon get accustomed to playing ball instead of trying to injure his neighbor, when it is nothing but a friendly tussle in which they are taking part. (p. 146)

Here we can see Naismith's apparent desire for basketball to provide boys with an alternative to violent sports such as rugby and football. A social gospel sport, basketball was constructed by Naismith to comply with the Muscular Christian philosophy of using sport to produce men with Christian values. Due to the YMCA's then significant sphere of influence, the game quickly spread to Christian missionaries across the world.

Basketball in Canada

T.D. Patton and L.W. Archibald introduced the game of basketball to Canada. Patton and Archibald were members of Naismith's inaugural basketball class at Springfield College. By 1892, Patton was teaching basketball at the YMCA in St. Stephen, New Brunswick and Archibald was teaching basketball at the YMCA in Montreal, Quebec (Morrow & Walmsley, 2013). In 1893, the first international game of basketball was played between a team from the Montreal YMCA, coached by Archibald, and a team from Burlington, Vermont (Morrow & Walmsley, 2013). Recognizing the growing popularity of the game, YMCA's across Canada began to create junior, intermediate, senior, and businessmen leagues (Morrow & Walmsley, 2013). Although most YMCA leagues were restricted to middle-class White men, Railway YMCA's "used basketball to improve life for railway workers across the country and to foster Christian-like leisure-time pursuits by organizing basketball leagues for them" (Morrow &

Walmsley, p. 274). Until the mid-20th century, organized basketball in Canada remained under the control of the YMCA.

While no longer controlled by Muscular Christians, the narrative constructed by some participants in this research project suggests that basketball remains a site for practices of gendered and racialized normalization. Within CIS men's basketball, for example, recent neoliberal developments in academia have resulted in the pressure to "win-at-all-costs," contrary to Naismith's initial intent for the sport. This emphasis is most evident in the narratives told by the coaches for the USO men's basketball team, Brian and Stuart. Hence, I have chosen to centre their narratives in chapters four and five, respectively.

Basketball in the US

The invention of basketball coincided with an influx of immigrants to the urban North. Between 1890 and 1920, the population of New York City (NYC), New York grew from 1.5 to 5.6 million people; and by 1910, forty percent of its residents were foreign born (Domke, 2011). Marked as "non-White" and placed at the bottom of racial and class hierarchies upon arrival, Jewish, Irish, Southern and Eastern European immigrants were often restricted from participating in traditional American sports (i.e. football and baseball). For those settling in the urban North, engagement with football and baseball was further hindered by the extensive pastoral space and equipment required to play. In contrast to these sports, the burgeoning game of basketball could be played in both open and developed spaces such as streets or gymnasiums -- complementing the verticality of the industrialized city (Domke, 2011); and was "flexible enough to be

played by anyone with enough ingenuity to corral a barrel hoop and roll up a pair of socks" (Grundy, Nelson, & Dyreson, 2011, p. 135). In this sense, basketball presented the new immigrant working-class living in the urban North with an accessible and affordable solution to both the spatial and structural constraints of the industrialized city.

Until the mid-20th century, working-class immigrant men located in the urban North utilized basketball as a site of both assimilation and resistance. Playing basketball provided new immigrant working-class with an opportunity to become both "American" and "White," while also making their distinct identities visible to the dominant group. The following is a list of prominent basketball teams during this period: Irish Brooklyn Visitations, South Philadelphia Hebrew Allstars, Buffalo Germans, and the Polish Detroit Pulaskis (Domke, 2011). Working-class Jewish communities in the urban North, in particular, were quick to adopt basketball. During the 1920's and 1930's, half of all players in the American Basketball League identified as Jewish; leading some sports writers to refer to basketball as a Jewish game (Domke, 2011). After WWII, however, Irish, Jewish, Southern and Eastern European immigrants became framed as "White," and experienced an increase in their social status and political power. Becoming associated with Whiteness provided these groups with the upward social mobility required to access higher education, open successful businesses, and move to the suburbs. By the mid-20th century, the changing demographics of the urban North meant that Jewish players no longer dominated traditional American urban sports such as basketball and boxing.

Early African American Engagement with Sport

During the era of plantation slavery in the US, African American engagement with sport varied greatly between the Southern and Northern States. For Black slaves in the American South, there were few opportunities to engage in sport. When Black slaves were permitted to play, it was often because Southern Whites hoped that their participation would create an anti-rebellion effect (Davis, 2008). That is to say, Southern Whites viewed sport as a White-controlled space for African Americans to release their anger, aggression, and hostility.

In contrast, Blacks living in the American North, although still limited by their access to dominant institutions, participated in a number of different sports leading up to the Civil War (Davis, 2008). During the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), some Black boxers and baseball players even gained prominence in the Northern White media (Grundy et al., 2014). In the 1880s, however, the emergence of, what Frederick Douglass called, “the colour-line” eventually led to the erasure of visible Black athletes. Indeed, the colour-line resulted in Blacks becoming barred from playing on amateur, professional, and most college sports teams (Grundy et al., 2014). In the American North, a small number of post-secondary institutions typically had one or two spaces informally reserved for African Americans -- though Black student-athletes were still required to sit out games played against all-White teams from the American South (Davis, 2008). Consequently, the majority of Black student-athletes began to attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

By the turn of the 20th century, the popularity of baseball began to decline in many African American communities. Although boxing remained popular, Whites

systematically discriminated against Black boxers. Why? Abdel-Shehid and Kalman-Lamb (2009) have suggested that during this period the World Heavyweight Championship held unparalleled symbolic value in Western society. Then thought to be the pinnacle of sporting achievement, the World Heavyweight Champion was given the unofficial label as the toughest man alive. As a result, most White boxing champions, such as Jim Jeffries, refused to fight Black opponents.

In 1908, Tommy Burns, a White boxer from Canada, agreed to fight Jack Johnson, a Black boxer who had previously been denied the opportunity to fight for the World Heavyweight Championship. Burns lost the fight to Johnson; contradicting the racist discourse that produced Black men as primitive “Others” -- lacking the intelligence required to be boxing champions (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2009). Consequently, Johnson’s victory triggered a crisis in White Masculine identity. For the first time in US history, a Black man was World Heavyweight Champion; legitimizing the racial anxieties of Whites in post-Civil War America (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2009). In response, a frantic search began for the “Great White Hope” who could defeat Johnson and restore White gender and racial hierarchies.

In 1910, Jeffries, who had previously refused to fight Blacks, came out of retirement to fight Johnson. Once again, despite his perceived biological inferiority, Johnson prevailed and sent White America into chaos. Following the fight, Whites across the US began to riot and target Blacks who were celebrating; eighteen people died and hundreds were injured (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2009). Johnson remained World Heavyweight Champion until losing to White boxer Jess Willard in 1915. After

Johnson's reign, another African American would not be given the opportunity to fight for the World Heavyweight Championship until 1937. During this period, the popularity of boxing began to decline in many African American communities.

I have included this brief history of African American engagement with early American sport for three reasons: 1. to demonstrate the historical role of sport in energizing White racial anxieties; 2. to highlight the historical intersection of sport with broader vectors of power; and 3. to explore the structural constraints faced by Black male athletes in post-Civil War America, which led to a decline in the popularity of baseball and boxing in many African American communities.

Early African American Engagement with Basketball

In the Southern States, the colour-line was legally enforced through the Jim Crow laws. Between 1876 and 1965, the Jim Crow laws used the legal doctrine of "separate but equal" to justify racial segregation and avoid violating the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution. In an attempt to escape persecution, many African Americans fled from the rural South to the urban North. Referred to as the "Great Migration," approximately six million Southern Blacks migrated to the urban North between 1910 and 1970 (Arnesen, 2002). Though protected from the Jim Crow laws, most African Americans were placed at the bottom of racial and class hierarchies upon their arrival in the urban North.

Despite the previously discussed decline in popularity of baseball and boxing within many African American communities, and a significant increase in the number of African Americans living in the urban North, the continued marginalization of Blacks within American society restricted early African American engagement with basketball.

Until the mid-20th century, African American access to semi-public and public sports facilities in the urban North remained restricted. Black men interested in basketball were forced to “pay-to-play” at racially segregated YMCAs during fixed hours (Brooks and McKail, 2008). At the same time, some school boards and neighbourhoods in the urban North also remained racially segregated. In Washington, D.C., for example, racially segregated schools resulted in athletic programs being underfunded at Black schools and racially segregated neighbourhood meant that there were only two Black playgrounds for fifty-thousand African American youth (Domke, 2011). Edwin Henderson, the “Grandfather of Black Basketball,” taught physical education at a Black public school in Washington, D.C. and was one of the first to address the barriers to African American engagement with basketball.

Henderson first learnt about the game of basketball while taking a summer course at Harvard in 1904. In 1905, Henderson developed the first all-Black amateur athletic association -- the Interscholastic Athletic Association (IAA); and the Eastern Board of Officials, which trained African American basketball referees. In 1906, Henderson also created the Washington D.C. Public School Athletic League. Informed by the ideals of Muscular Christianity, Henderson introduced the game of basketball to Black youth as a way to improve the mind and body of the participants through competition. Henderson felt that basketball gave Black participants the space to create an expressive identity and develop a positive connection to their body. The potential health benefits of basketball resonated with African American communities in the urban North, which were struggling with high Black youth mortality rates. Henderson argued that life in the urban North “left

Blacks neither the time nor the space to exercise regularly and to reinvigorate their 'natural vitality'" (Domke, 2011, p. 143). Through Henderson, Black youth in Washington D.C. were introduced to basketball; an accessible and affordable site to increase their level of physical fitness and immunity to diseases associated with urban life.

Beyond the physical benefits, Henderson also championed the social and economic benefits to African American engagement with basketball. Henderson felt that because basketball was a site where Blacks and Whites could compete on equal grounds, through hard work and determination African Americans could rid themselves of negative racial stereotypes (Domke, 2011). Finally, Henderson felt the success of Black basketball players had the potential to develop into a source of civic pride for African American communities. In this context, basketball was initially framed by Henderson as a positive opportunity to address race relations and a potential vessel for Black upward social mobility.

By 1906, basketball had spread to African American communities in larger cities, such as NYC, within the urban North. In contrast to Washington D.C., however, Black engagement with basketball in NYC began through the formation of private athletic clubs (Domke, 2011). The formation of private athletic clubs provided Black basketball players the space to train and host regional tournaments. In 1909, the first interregional competition between Black-fives took place; featuring one team from NYC and multiple teams from Washington, D.C., which played in the IAA founded by Henderson (Domke, 2011). Interregional basketball tournaments quickly became successful within many

African American communities in the urban North. By drawing close to three thousand fans per game, some Black-fives were able to pay their players up to \$25 per game (Domke, 2011). Emerging as more than a White sport, basketball soon became tied to Black masculinity and African American culture.

During the height of the Great Depression, forty percent of Black males living in the urban North were unemployed (Sundstrom, 1992). To provide relief for unemployed workers, government programs to create new sporting facilities were introduced (Yep, 2012). For unemployed working-class Black males in the urban North, the basketball court became a space for self-expression. Black men's engagement with basketball led to the creation of no-look passes, behind the back dribbling, and jump shots (Grundy et al., 2014). While these moves were informed by the rules and objectives of the game, each allowed for self-expression within a team-based contact sport.

Unlike the traditional American sports, the allowance for self-expression in basketball resonated with unemployed working-class Black men in search of a coping mechanism for both economic and racial-inferiority anxiety (Sailes, 1996). For many early Black basketball players, then, self-expression often took precedence over winning and the development of fundamental basketball techniques. Characterized by flashy moves and individual athleticism, the “Black style of play” was criticized by Whites for contradicting the social gospel roots of the game. However, as a new and developing game played across all demographics, basketball quickly embraced these innovations. By the mid-20th century, Black men’s sense of ownership over the development of the game,

something that the traditional American sports could not offer, helped basketball to pass both baseball and boxing in popularity within many African American communities.

The Urban Crisis

Post-WWII, the vast majority of African Americans did not experience an increase in their economic or political power. As the American economy shifted towards financialization and the White migration to the suburbs began, working-class Blacks living in urban areas were increasingly subject to racism, social isolation, joblessness, welfare dependency and, consequently, high rates of criminalization. Brooks and McKail (2008) described African American male youth living in the urban North during this period as an "endangered species" (p. 378). Vulnerable to exploitation and instrumental to the projection of the US as a post-racial society and meritocracy, professional and collegiate basketball teams began to recruit Black male basketball players from urban areas.

In 1959, Wilt Chamberlain signed a contract to play for the Harlem Globetrotters for \$30,000, which is the equivalent of \$245,000 in 2016. Six years later, Texas Western University beat the University of Kentucky in men's basketball, which was the first time a Black-five had beaten a White-five at the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) level. Until this victory, Black male athletes attending a post-secondary institution "were primarily interested in earning a degree and being upwardly mobile in something beyond sports after graduation" (Brooks & McKail, 2008, p. 376). Indeed, there was little money to be earned in all-Black sport leagues. However, the increasing visibility of Black basketball players at both the professional and collegiate level,

alongside the barriers to Black success in non-athletic careers, resulted in near compulsory participation for working-class Black male youth -- especially those from urban areas (Ogden & Hilt, 2003). Working-class Black male youth from urban areas began to experience both a push from African American communities to pursue basketball as a legitimate vehicle for upward social mobility and a pull from professional leagues and post-secondary institutions that wanted to increase their chances of winning and thus, maximize profit.

The White integration of Black men into US sporting cultures is an example of the interest-convergence principle (Bell, 1980). Following WWII, the rapid commercialization of US sporting cultures forced professional leagues and post-secondary institutions to conceal their racial prejudices and “recruit the best players irrespective of color and academic preparedness” (Simiyu Njororai, 2012, p. 45). At the same time, the nascent American Civil Rights Movement and Jackie Robinson’s success in professional baseball applied social pressure to White team owners and college administrators to racially-integrate sports (Brooks & McKail, 2008). The interest-convergence principle, then, explains how policies established within US sporting cultures during the mid-20th century, while designed to promote a discourse of equality, served to perpetuate existing power relations.

As the urban crisis continues to oppress Black communities today, making the avenues for income generation, professional training, and higher education much more limited for Black men, basketball remains a strong lure for African American communities. Nonetheless, “most Black American boys will never achieve the wealth

and fame of their athletic role models through sports. Keeping them mesmerized with sports heroes may actually weaken their ability to pursue other avenues to success” (Ferber, 2007, p. 157). Indeed, while close to six-hundred thousand young men play high school basketball every year in the US -- only 3.3 percent will go on to play men’s basketball at an NCAA member institution (NCAA Research, 2013). Even at the NCAA level, only 1.2 percent of all student-athletes will make it to the NBA (NCAA Research, 2013). And amongst this elite group, injuries and an ever-increasing talent pool of younger aspirants have resulted in an average NBA career length of 4.9 years (NBA Career Length, 2011). Moreover, Torre (2009) found that sixty percent of NBA players declare bankruptcy within five years after their retirement. Hence, playing in the NBA does not guarantee long-term financial stability and the relatively short average career length means that by the age of thirty most players will have to find a new career -- often while dealing with debilitating injuries, limited financial resources, and without the help of a college degree.

The transition from athlete to non-athlete can be especially difficult for Black NBA players who, in contrast to White NBA players, return to a system of racial inequality when their playing career ends (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2009). Becoming a gatekeeper or stakeholder in the NBA, for example, would appear to be a natural career trajectory for many retired Black NBA players. Unfortunately, a racial hierarchy stills exists in the NBA. During the 2014-15 NBA season, those who identified as Black or African-American included: 74.4 percent of players; 30 percent of head coaches; 10 percent of team vice-presidents; and 7 percent of team CEO/Presidents --

only one NBA team is owned by an African American. These disparate numbers corroborate Ferber's (2007) argument that Black bodies can only be admired in Western society when they are under White control. With a limited number of opportunities to become an owner or control their own interests as a head coach or general manager, Black NBA players have been referred to as forty million dollar slaves (Rhoden, 2010). A reality compounded by the fact that as the only professional men's basketball league in North America, the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) has limited bargaining power.

Chapter 3: Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I review the critical sport literature that guided my analysis and provide an overview of my theoretical framework. To begin, I explore the emergence of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and its eventual role in shaping the direction of early critical sport literature. I then highlight both the possibilities and limitations of using hegemonic masculinity in critical analyses of sport. Following this, I outline my decision to use a Foucauldian and feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework. I argue that a Foucauldian analysis, when combined with feminist poststructuralism, allows for a more nuanced analysis of the complex agencies articulated by participants and the relations of power that structure their subjectivities.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Until the late-20th century, sociologists largely understood gender as a role. This understanding was legitimized by sex role theorists such as Parsons who, as a structural functionalist, suggested that the traditional heterosexual nuclear family unit operated most efficiently when men and women performed distinct roles (Gerhardt, 2002). Accordingly, Parsons conceptualized the male sex role as an instrumental one (e.g. breadwinner) and the female sex role as expressive (e.g. caring for the children). From this framework, then, sex role theorists conceptualized gender as a binary with “two fixed, static, and mutually exclusive role containers” (Kimmel, 1986, p. 521). By the late-1970s, however, feminist researchers began to critique sex role theory for its conceptualization of masculinity and femininity in singular and complementary terms.

In the 1980s, many feminist researchers began to theorize masculinity in plural and political terms. Most notably, Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) called attention to a hierarchy of masculinities in Australian school settings by interviewing boys, teachers, and parents. A decade later, Connell published the book *Masculinities*, which put forth a theory of masculinity that would soon become ubiquitous in men's studies. Translated into six languages and widely cited across academia, a second edition of *Masculinities* was released in 2005. In this book, Connell (2005) responded to the positivist idea of a single fixed "natural" masculinity, as championed by sex role theory, through an exploration of historically and geographically specific masculinities.

At the same time, Connell (2005) also explored individual men's role in maintaining women's subordination through the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is best understood as the normative version of masculinity that sits atop any given hierarchy of masculinities. To maintain the gender order, rather than actively committing violence against women, Connell (2005) posited that individual men are only required to passively acquiesce to the norms of hegemonic masculinity. This privilege is characterized as men's patriarchal dividend. Hence, feminist researchers most often use the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a heuristic tool to highlight how men's dominance functions through complicity.

While Gramsci used the concept of hegemony to explore relations of power between social classes, Connell (2005) later adapted it to explore relations of power between men and women. A neo-Marxist idea, then, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been heavily critiqued by post-structuralist theorists, such as Pringle

(2005), for its conceptualization of men through three mutually exclusive narratives: (i) as active agents, who reinforce their position within the gender order through aggressions and micro-aggressions towards women and the feminine; (ii) as passive agents, who collude in the production of hard masculinity and the cultural devaluation of women and the feminine; (iii) or resisting subjects, who reconstruct dominant narratives of masculinity through alternative constructs of manhood. In contrast to these dominant trends, I draw on a Foucauldian lens in this research project to develop the possibilities for a more nuanced analysis of the multiple and contradictory subject positions of male athletes and their coaches.

Men, Masculinities, and Sport

Beginning in the 1980s, sport became the subject of many critical inquiries from feminist researchers. During this period, hegemonic stability theory was popular amongst left-leaning academics (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As such, much of the early critical sport literature used the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a lynchpin in its theoretical framework (Anderson, 2002; Bryson, 1987; Davis, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Hargreaves, 2002; McKay, Messner & Sabo, 2000; Messner, 1990; Trujillo, 1991). In a meta-summary of this literature, Rowe (1997) concluded:

Sport is a crucial site for the reproduction of patriarchal structures and values, a male-dominated secular religion that has celebrated the physically aggressive and often violent deeds of men. Sport has been an integral element of self-sustaining forms of exclusivist male culture, lubricating a closed system of male bonding and female denigration. (p. 246)

While the concept of hegemonic masculinity provided important early insights into the connection between sport and broader vectors of power, feminist researchers have begun to develop alternative theoretical frameworks to explore the plurality of masculinities within various sporting cultures, including rock climbing (Robinson, 2008), rugby (Pringle, 2008), soccer (Adams, 2011), snowboarding (Thorpe, 2010), surfing (Waite & Warren, 2008), and windsurfing (Wheaton, 2000).

Most notably, feminist post-structuralist researchers have begun to draw upon Foucault's ideas of discourse and discipline to problematize previous constructions of sport (e.g. Cole, Giardina & Andrews, 2004; Crocket, 2014; Denison, 2007; Gearity & Mills, 2012; Markula, 2003; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Pringle, Rinehart & Caudwell, 2015; Walters, Payne, Schluter & Thompson, 2015). The emergence of these Foucauldian analyses suggests that there is a desire amongst feminist researchers to reinscribe sport "as a contradictory and complex medium for masculinity making" (Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001, p. 118). Sharing this desire, I have chosen to take up a Foucauldian analysis in this research project.

Theoretical Framework

To theorize the narratives told by participants, I draw on Foucault's understanding of power to develop a more nuanced discussion of masculinities within a localized context. In traditional Marxist thought, power is most often conceptualized as a resource and as repressive. As resources are in limited supply, Marxian analyses of power relations argue that power is concentrated amongst the bourgeoisie who wield it over the proletariat to lure them into a false consciousness -- ensuring their subordination and

repressing their freedom. In contrast, Foucault conceptualized power as a relation and a productive force:

When one speaks of “power,” people think immediately of a political structure, a government, a dominant social class, the master facing the slave, and so on. That is not at all what I think when I speak of “relationships of power.” I mean that in human relations, whatever they are -- whether it be a question of communicating verbally, as we are doing right now, or a question of a love relationship, an institutional or economic relationship -- power is always present: I mean the relationships in which one wishes to direct the behaviour of another. (Bernauer & Rasmussen, 1988, p. 11)

That is to say, power is not only concentrated in a dominant social class and wielded coercively over individuals -- it is omnipresent in all relationships and produced through discursive relations that operate at multiple levels.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1978) suggested that Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon exemplifies how power operates in contemporary society. In the Panopticon, individual cells separate prisoners from each other -- both physically and visibly. To maximize the efficiency of the institution, all cells are visible to guards located in a central tower. By concealing guards in a central tower, prisoners are unable to determine which cells are currently being monitored. As a result, guards are not required to use physical force to direct the behaviour of prisoners. Instead, prisoner’s knowledge of their permanent visibility directs them to discipline themselves to bring their behaviour in line with that of a normal (i.e. ideal) prisoner. Hence, Foucault (1978) argued that power is a

productive force insofar as it invites us, as subjects, to become “the principle of [our] own subjection” (p. 202). The advent of liberalism, then, did not necessarily increase the agency of subjects. Rather, a more efficient form of power has emerged to “punish less, perhaps; but certainly to punish better” (Foucault, 1978, p. 88).

To Foucault (1978), this new form of power now permeates all social institutions. In sport, for example, coaches use examinations to measure their players’ “weight, sleep patterns, dietary and drug intake, body shape, athletic performances, fitness levels, training and mood states and even recreational pastimes” (Pringle, 2007, p. 391). Consequently, coaches, operating as “supervisors” in the sport arena, are no longer required to use physical force to shape the bodies of their players (Markula & Pringle, 2007). Instead, their players are schooled to discipline themselves (e.g. exercising, dieting, rehabilitating) to bring their bodies in line with that of a normal (i.e. ideal) player. In this context, Foucault’s (1978) idea that “the body is invested with relations of power” is useful for re-thinking the modernist notion of the body as a “natural” object (p. 26).

Foucault’s understanding of power also highlights the role of discourse in maintaining relations of power. As Foucault noted (2012), “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (p. 100). A discourse can be understood as “a series or set of statements and practices that refer to a particular time, place and phenomenon” (Crocket, 2012, p. 33). Rather than reflect reality, then, discourse produces it. In contemporary Canadian society, for example, a discourse of gender that declares men to be naturally more athletic than women is produced as a “truth” and, therefore, operates as

a productive power by encouraging parents to enroll their sons, but not their daughters, in sport. As this discourse circulates knowledge that functions to direct the behaviour of individuals and larger social institutions (through funding, media attention etc.), it can be linked to relations of power; hence, the Foucauldian concept of power/knowledge.

An anti-essentialist, Foucault rejected the modernist pursuit to locate the essence of things. Consequently, rather than attempting to produce “truths” about the social body, Foucault sought to explore the constitution of subjects (i.e. the process of subjectification). While Foucault is often criticized for ignoring gender, feminist poststructuralist researchers, such as Butler (2011), have adapted his work to explore the ways in which individuals are made into subjects of gender; how particular subject positions are produced as appropriately gendered; and the consequences that stem from a binary understanding of gender.

Through these inquiries, gender has become understood as a discursive construct. In other words, rather than a role, gender is now understood as a social process that is accomplished interactionally, and daily, through “a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of substance, of a natural sort of being” (Butler, 2011, p. 33). Similarly, West and Zimmerman (1987) suggest, “a person’s gender is not simply an aspect of what one is, but, more fundamentally, it is something that one does, and does recurrently, in interaction with others” (p. 140). In this sense, gender is what you “do” rather than who you are (West & Zimmerman, 1987); or, in Butler’s (2011) words, gender is performative.

In this research project, I explore how the discourses of gender that circulate in the sport arena function to govern participants' understanding of self and others. Indeed, it is through discourse that "meanings, subjects, and subjectivities are formed" (Foucault, 1978, p. 101). Accordingly, it is also through discourse that some subjects and subjectivities become devalued. A discourse of gender that declares men to be naturally more aggressive than women, for example, functions to normalize specific notions of masculinity in the sport arena. To be seen as "normal," rather than "abnormal," male athletes often take up a masculine identity that both reaffirms this discourse and rejects what this discourse considers to be unacceptable -- Butler (1993) conceptualizes this to be the "constitutive outside" (p. 3). The constitutive outside refers to gendered identities that are considered unacceptable and must be rejected by the individual to reaffirm their identity as "normal." Hence, the pervasiveness of heteronormativity in contemporary Canadian sporting cultures, as normalizing practices direct male athletes to define themselves in opposition to women to make themselves intelligible as "real men." Thus, discourses of gender can be implicated in the perpetuation of power relations between men and women.

Embodied Complicity

In modern thought, women's perceived relation to the body justified their position as the sole knowable subjects (Butler, 1993). This antiquated discourse continues to influence conventional thought. Within the critical sport literature, for example, Foucauldian researchers have tended to focus only on the female body as a site of normalizing practices (e.g. Chapman, 1997; Cole, 1993; Duncan, 1994; Markula, 1998).

Corporeality, however, must not be associated only with women. As Gershick and Miller (1995) argued, the body is the “central foundation of how men define themselves and how they are defined by others” (p. 183). Crucial to my analysis, then, is the idea that the male body is not disembodied but a primary means of classification and differentiation in the social construction and regulation of masculinities (Connell, 2005; Butler, 2011). Hence, in chapter four, I highlight the narrative of what I call “embodied complicity” told by the assistant coach for the USO men’s basketball team, Stuart. In theorizing this narrative, I created the term “embodied complicity” to provide me with the language required to unpack the complex mix of stories related to sport, masculinities, and the body.

Aspirational Resistance

Marxists often critique Foucault for constructing an ostensibly anti-revolutionary understanding of power. Much of Marxist thought is concerned with putting forth a program of collective resistance that would allow the proletariat to wage a unified struggle against their oppressors. Foucault’s “power is everywhere” thesis, however, blurs the line between oppressed and oppressor. Hence, rather than a collective resistance, Foucault’s work advocates for a program of local resistance, which “centers around the argument that, as contextual, historical beings, launching local resistant efforts against specific regimes is more appropriate and more effective than trying to formulate universal theories to justify acts of resistance” (Hekman, 2013, p. 183). In chapter six, I explore the narrative of what I call “aspirational resistance” told by Brian and sketch how this shapes his negotiation of some of the gendered norms in the sport arena. Once again,

I created the term “aspirational resistance” to provide me with the language required to unpack the complex mix of stories related to sport, masculinities, and racialization shared by Brian.

Pleasures and Desires (In the Sport Arena)

Within the critical sport literature, Foucauldian researchers have found that male athletes are willing to subject themselves to the normalizing practices associated with sporting achievement (e.g. dieting, training, and rehabilitation) (Walters et al., 2015; Pringle, 2009). More than a site for the regulation of men’s bodies, then, I argue that sport should also be explored as a site of pleasure for male athletes. In studying power relations, some researchers chose to ignore pleasure. Power is not separate from pleasure; instead, pleasure can be understood as the productive effect of power (Foucault, 1978). In conventional thought, pleasure is most often conceptualized as a response to physiological stimuli. This essentialist framework views pleasure as innate, “an essential quality that we all possess and experience in similar ways, in and through our bodies” (Gerdin, 2014, p. 26). While I do not deny that biological processes play a role in shaping human pleasures, I conceptualize pleasure as a discursive construct in this research project. This is important, as experiences of pleasure within the sport arena have rarely been examined (Pringle, 2008). To encourage men to challenge and resist the dominant discourses that circulate in the sport arena, I aim to develop a better understanding of pleasure as a productive force and a meaningful aspect of men’s sport participation.

A Foucauldian reading of pleasure asserts that the “workings of affect (i.e. pre-discursive experiences of intensity) can prepare a body for action;” however, “these

affective intensities can only be consciously understood once negotiated and interpreted through a discursive lens” (Gerdin & Pringle, 2015, p. 5). In other words, when an experience produces a physiological response (e.g. fear, pain, or anger) -- we interpret that experience based on the discursive resources available to us. Pickard (2015), for example, found that young ballet dancers understand pain to be part of their development process. As a result, when young ballet dancers experience pain they interpret it to be pleasurable. In highlighting the ability of discourse to produce pain as pleasurable, this analysis calls attention to how pleasure “can be understood as a multifaceted, complex, subjective, and, at times, seemingly contradictory emotional experience” (Pringle, 2009, p. 214). In this research project, then, I do not attempt to define pleasure but rather understand how the discursive production of pleasure is related to complex experiences of gendered belonging and achievement, which themselves rely on and reproduce social inequalities.

Alongside pleasure, I also understand desire as a discursive construct. As Gerdin (2014) noted, “the connection between pleasures and desire is also important to consider since some suggest that what we find pleasurable is dependent on what we desire” (p. 27). In our patriarchal capitalist society, for example, hard masculine characteristics such as competition, aggression, and toughness are produced as admirable. Consequently, the physicality of sport is often interpreted by male athletes to be a pleasurable experience as it provides them the discursive resources to construct an appropriate masculine identity and become associated with culturally desired characteristics (Gerdin & Pringle, 2015). Hence, Pringle (2009) suggested that men’s participation in sport “should not necessarily

be regarded as a passive process within which athletes are discursively coerced” (p. 219). Instead, we can draw on Foucault (1980) who noted, “power is not simply oppressive; we are caught in its networks precisely because some aspects of the exercise and experience of power are profoundly pleasurable” (p. 34). In chapter seven, then, I explore the narratives of what I call active docility as told by the student-athletes in this research project. My aim is to make sense of the pleasures they gain from operating as docile agents in the sport, which requires an acceptance of gendered values they claim to reject.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

In this chapter, I unpack my decision to use narrative analysis as my methodology. To do this, I begin by sketching how the relativist ontology that guides narrative analysis articulates with my Foucauldian and feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework. I then discuss the implications of using this methodology, including how narrative analysis informed my role as an interviewer and my interpretation of the narratives told by participants. Finally, I discuss the recruitment process, demographics of participants, research design, potentials and limitations of insider status, power dynamics involved in conducting the interviews, as well as ethics and epistemic responsibility.

Narrative Analysis

I was drawn to narrative analysis as my guiding methodology because it provides a framework for exploring the intersection of biography, history, and society -- and thus, has been characterized by Riessman (2013) as the “systematic study of personal experience and meaning” (p. 185). My approach to narrative analysis in this research project is primarily informed by the work of Best (2003), Dahlberg and McCaig (2010), Holstein and Gubrium (1997), and Riessman (2013). These researchers use a relativist ontology and work from the assumption that “there is no single reality apart from our perceptions of it. All of us experience reality from our own point of view, which means that all of us experience a different reality” (Dahlberg & McCaig, 2010, p. 24). In contrast to more traditional methodologies, then, narrative analysis privileges subjectivity over objectivity. Holstein and Gubrium (1997), for example, direct researchers to

“activate narrative production” and eschew “canons of rational neutrality” (p. 125). In this sense, narrative analysis understands interview talk as a reflection of a reality that is jointly constructed through a dialogical exchange between the interviewee and interviewer. Indeed, both participants and researchers are conceptualized as active agents in the local meaning making process (Best, 2003; Riessman, 2013).

Narrative analysis also understands interview talk as a form of identity work. As gender comes into existence through performative iterations of the discursive resources available to us in a specific socio-historical context, our gendered identity requires constant maintenance and is never a completed project (Butler, 2011). Given this, I conceptualize the interview talk articulated by participants as an attempt to provisionally constitute their gendered identities – amongst their other identities. More than simply “passive vessels of answers,” then, narrative analysis constructs participants as active agents continuously negotiating how they want to be known and articulating a preferred self from their multiplicity of selves (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 125). Hence, I am not interested in attempting to locate the “true” attitudes and behaviours of participants in this research project.

Rather than placing the stories told by participants into a “true or false reality report,” I am interested in exploring how the interview talk articulated by participants reflects the discursive world around them as well as reinscribes, unsettles, and/or challenges those power relations (Holstein & Gubrium, 1997, p. 65). To be sure, the “truth” lies not in their factual representation but in how the narratives told by participants connect to historical and cultural discourses (Riessman, 2013). In this way,

this approach to narrative analysis can be understood as, ontologically, complementary to my Foucauldian and feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework.

It should be noted that much of my analysis in this research project was initially focused on sketching the local production of gender. However, as I unpacked the discourses through which participants attempted to make themselves intelligible as “real men,” I began to see how broader vectors of power are articulated through gender. That is to say, while many of the interview questions focused on gender, participants also shared stories that positioned themselves in relation to larger discourses about race, class, and sexuality. Thus, the interview became a place to not only “do gender,” but also map out the intersection of masculinity with race, class, and heteronormativity (West & Zimmerman, 1987).

Recruitment

As noted, Brian offered to provide me with a list containing the contact information for six student-athletes on the USO men’s basketball team. I do not know whether Brian felt this list was representative of the team. Included in this group were student-athletes between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, including: both first and fourth-year players, those with and without athletic scholarships, from rural and urban backgrounds, born in and outside Canada, from working-class and middle-class homes, and from a wide range of academic disciplines (e.g. business communications, community health, computer science, sociology, sport management, and visual arts). Indeed, each student-athlete in this research project has a unique major. Moreover, the list also included three White and three Black identified student-athletes. Based on the

narratives they told, I do not believe that those interviewed were particularly invested in the topic of this research project. It should be noted that Brian had been in his position for just over one month at the time of our initial meeting. Hence, he may have had very limited knowledge of his players and their interests.

In my introductory email to participants, I explained that I was a graduate student wanting to speak with male student-athletes about issues related to gender, sport, and masculinities. I also explained that the interviews would be recorded, transcribed, and analyzed as part of my MA thesis. All six student-athletes contacted agreed to participate. As discussed, both coaches also eventually agreed to participate, allowing me to complete two additional interviews. The total number of participants included in this research project is directed by the time and monetary restraints related to completing an MA thesis. On arriving at the interview site, participants were given a hard copy of the letter of invitation, asked to choose a pseudonym, and invited to sign the consent form. No monetary compensation was provided.

Participants

Six participants are student-athletes on the USO men's basketball team. Two participants are coaches for the team. All participants have played men's basketball at the Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) level. All participants self-identified as both heterosexual and male. The players ranged from nineteen to twenty-five years old. The coaches, Brian and Stuart, were thirty-two and twenty-three years old, respectively. The following is a summary of the demographic information provided by participants at the

beginning of the interview. In this research project, pseudonyms have been used for all participants as well for any individuals mentioned in the narratives told by participants.

Nick is a nineteen-year-old, second-year Computer Science major in his second season on the USO men's basketball team. Coming out of high school, Nick did not receive any athletic scholarship offers. Nonetheless, Nick was encouraged by his high school basketball coach to attend the open tryouts for the USO men's basketball team. After impressing the coaching staff, Nick was the only player from the open tryouts to be offered a spot on the team. As he did not receive an athletic scholarship, Nick is referred to as a "walk on." Growing up, Nick preferred to play field lacrosse but excelled at basketball due to his height. Nick was raised in a single-mother household in London, Ontario. He has two younger brothers and a younger sister. He self-identified as White.

Demoi is a twenty-one-year-old, third-year Business Communications major in his first season on the USO men's basketball team. Like Nick, Demoi did not receive any athletic scholarship offers coming out of high school. Unlike Nick, Demoi attended the USO for two years before joining the team. After excelling in intramural play, Demoi was encouraged by friends to attend the open tryouts for the USO men's basketball team. In 2011, Demoi made the team during open tryouts and is now a student-athlete. This makes him the only participant in this research project to have occupied the subject positions of both student and student-athlete. Hence, the narrative told by Demoi provides unique insights. Demoi described the transition from student to student-athlete as being difficult. To meet the demands of being a student-athlete, Demoi chose to switch from full-time to part-time studies. He has one older sister, whom he characterized as an

athletic role model. Demoi's decision to attend the USO was influenced by the success of his sister as a student-athlete on the USO women's volleyball team. Demoi was raised in Burlington, Ontario. He self-identified as White.

Alex is a nineteen-year-old, first-year Visual Arts and Design major in his first season on the USO men's basketball team. Alex was born in Egypt and moved to Canada with his family at the age of six. He has one older and two younger brothers. Growing up, his parents valued education and did not understand the Western emphasis on sport participation. Hence, his passion for basketball was initially met with skepticism by his parents. In high school, Alex quickly excelled at basketball, eventually receiving athletic scholarship offers from across Canada. Alex initially committed to the University of New Brunswick. For undisclosed reasons, Alex de-committed from UNB and chose to commit to the University of British Columbia (UBC). Shortly after this decision, however, Alex learned that he did not have the necessary academic requirements to enter UBC. As this occurred late in the recruitment process, Alex was unable to find another program with an athletic scholarship to offer him. Financially unable to enter a CIS member institution without an athletic scholarship, Alex was forced to sit out the entire year. The next spring his high school basketball coach helped him connect with the coaching staff at the USO and secure his spot on the team. His success in basketball has inspired one of his younger brothers to pursue an athletic scholarship in both basketball and football. Alex was raised in Waterloo, Ontario. He self-identified as Black.

Gord is a twenty-one-year-old, fourth-year Sport Management major in his fourth season on the USO men's basketball team. His father also played on the USO men's

basketball team, and is in the USO Athletic Hall of Fame. Growing up, Gord hoped to follow his father's example and play basketball at the USO. Although his father taught him the fundamentals of the game, Gord was never formally coached by him. In high school, Gord played on the same basketball team as Stuart – another participant in this research project, and now his coach. In his first season, Gord won the team's Rookie of the Year award. Gord characterized his older sister and his father as his athletic role models. His older sister was a student-athlete for the USO women's volleyball team. Gord was raised in Milton, Ontario. He self-identified as White.

Kevin is a twenty-five-year-old, third-year Community Health student in his third season on the USO men's basketball team. Kevin is from Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Kevin's father played soccer for the Trinidadian national team. His father was forced to retire due to knee injuries. Both parents are from Trinidad. The family moved to Canada when Kevin was six months old. Before entering the USO, Kevin was a student-athlete on the men's basketball team at a Canadian Collegiate Athletic Association (CCAA) member institution. At the age of twenty-five, Kevin is the oldest student-athlete to participate in this research project. Through the stories he shared, Kevin worked to construct himself as a "father figure" on the team. Kevin has three older sisters, one older brother, and one younger brother. He characterized his older brother as his athletic role model. He has a niece that plays high school basketball and hopes to receive an NCAA athletic scholarship. Kevin was raised in Scarborough, Ontario. He self-identified as Black.

Jarvis is a nineteen-year-old, first-year Sociology major in his first season on the USO men's basketball team. In grade seven, he began playing house league basketball at a local YMCA to improve his health. Jarvis soon developed a passion for the game and began playing in more competitive leagues. He has a cousin that plays professional soccer in Europe. Like his cousin, Jarvis hopes to play professional basketball in Europe. Having grown up in a working-poor family led by a single mother, Jarvis conceptualizes sport as an "escape" and his most viable route to help his family financially. He has a younger sister that is athletic but prefers to sing and play the piano. Jarvis also took piano lessons growing up, though he no longer plays. Jarvis was raised in Toronto, Ontario. He self-identified as Black.

Stuart is a twenty-three-year-old, fifth-year Concurrent Education major in his third season as an assistant coach for the USO men's basketball team. Stuart's father is a high school teacher and basketball coach. In high school, Stuart received athletic scholarship offers from both CIS and NCAA member institutions. At the time, his parents were going through a "difficult" divorce. Attending the USO allowed him to remain close to his family. After his first year, Stuart was named to the OUA West All-Rookie team. After his second year, Stuart was forced to retire due to injuries. Shortly after leaving the team, the coaching staff asked him to return as an assistant coach. Stuart has one older brother and two older sisters. Stuart was raised in St. Catharines, Ontario. He self-identified as White.

Brian is thirty-two-years-old and is in his first season as head coach for the USO men's basketball team. His parents are immigrants from Ghana. He is the youngest of

five siblings. Similar to Alex, Brian's parents valued education over sport. Participating in sport, however, allowed Brian to avoid gang life. As a student-athlete at McMaster University, Brian played on the men's basketball for four years while earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in Sociology. After graduating, Brian worked with the Toronto Police Service (TPS) for ten years -- eventually reaching the rank of Detective Constable. While with the TPS, Brian was head coach for a CIS women's basketball team and most recently spent a year as an apprentice coach with the Toronto Raptors of the National Basketball Association (NBA). Brian eventually left the TPS to become head coach for the USO men's basketball team. Brian has a daughter, Breea, with his common-law partner Andrea. Brian was raised in Toronto, Ontario. He self-identified as Black.

Research Design

This thesis employs a single-case research design. I did not choose the USO men's basketball team because it was a negative or positive case (Ackerly & True, 2010). Rather, I chose this case because, as the men's basketball team at a CIS member institution, it enabled me to address my research questions. My decision to conduct a case study was also influenced by Brian's willingness to help me find participants and the time constraints associated with completing an MA thesis. In my initial research proposal, I planned to conduct a focus group. Given the research questions, however, I realized that a focus group might hinder participation or cause some participants to offer responses that constituted an appropriate masculine identity. Indeed, when studying men and masculinities, "it is important to be aware of how hierarchy within the group may affect the data" (Kitzinger, 2000, p. 300). Hence, I decided that interviews provided me the best

opportunity to explore the lived experiences of participants and unpack how their understandings of gender and masculinities intersect with their social location.

I chose a semi-structured interview guide because it allowed participants the freedom to express their thoughts and to highlight their areas of interest. Within semi-structured interviews, participants help guide the conversation and can address certain issues not previously identified or anticipated by the researcher (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Semi-structured interviews also allow researchers to probe, in-depth, specific topics and themes that emerge during the interview process. In this context, Rapley (2001) encourages researchers that use semi-structured interviews to reflect on their role in directing the narratives told by participants – as it is the researcher who asks the questions, promotes certain topics, and decides what responses to probe.

In this research project, the interviews lasted, on average, approximately one hour. The two outliers occurred in the first and final interviews. The first interview lasted thirty-five minutes and the final interview lasted two hours. All interviews were digitally recorded. After each interview, I wrote autoethnographic reflections and took note of emergent themes. These post-interview field notes informed my analysis of the data. I began transcribing between interviews, which allowed me to reflect on emergent themes.

Insider Status: Possibilities and Limitations

In qualitative research, the researcher is “the main research tool” -- responsible for both data collection and analysis (Holloway, 1997, p. 136). In this sense, the potentials and limitations of insider status should be addressed. As a twenty-six-year-old,

university-educated, heterosexual White male, I match the demographic makeup of most participants in this research project. All participants are between the ages of nineteen and thirty-two, university educated (or pursuing a university degree), self-identified as heterosexual and male; half identified as White. These shared demographics provided me with partial insider status.

Consistent with my Foucauldian and feminist post-structuralist framework, however, I do not conceptualize my partial insider status as something that allowed me to discover the “truth” about participants. Instead, I understand my partial insider status as a research tool that facilitated my ability to share an identity, language, and lived experience with participants. When I asked participants to discuss their feelings about the use of gendered language in the locker room, for example, I was often met with blank stares. However, by drawing on my lived experience as an athlete, I was able to use prompts that were in the language of sport and gain cooperation from participants who were then more often able to articulate a range of experiences in response. In this sense, I used my partial insider status to construct a field identity around my lived experience as an athlete, which included an awareness of dress, language, and posture in sporting cultures. By using my partial insider status to gain legitimacy and move fluidly between the subject positions of researcher and “one of the guys,” I took a feminist dialectical approach to the negotiation of my insider/outside status. Instead of creating an insider/outside dichotomy, this approach allows for “the preservation of the complexity of similarities and differences” (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009, p. 60). Overall, I conceptualize

my field identity as in flux between researcher and insider -- and acknowledge that researchers do not have a single way of presenting ourselves to others.

The limitations of insider status can include some participants expressing a sense of confusion when a researcher responds from a perspective other than that of the researcher (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). In this research project, I did not perceive any confusion from participants when I responded from my field identity. Instead, I found that participants often used phrases such as “you know what I mean?” and “right?” when responding to questions. While these responses can be read as conversation “filler” or an attempt to avoid elaboration and jeopardize their constructed identities -- it can also be read as a rhetorical device used by participants to acknowledge a shared identity (Schwalbe & Wolkomir, 2001). In this context, perhaps due to assumed similarities, it is possible that my partial insider status caused some participants to not fully unpack their experiences.

Power Dynamics

Within interviews, participants have little control over things such as the interviewer’s identity, the questions asked, probes, and flow of the discussion. For male participants, then, the interview is a place to both signify their manhood as well as have it threatened. To ward off the perceived threat to their sense of self, some male participants attempt to establish compensatory control in interviews (e.g. by becoming aggressive or attempting to dominate the conversation). Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2001) suggested that male participants might be further threatened “if it seems that the interviewer is interested in gender, broadly construed, because this makes the subject's identity as a man more

salient to the interaction” (p. 206). In this research project, the responses articulated by participants seemed to be only occasionally shaped by a desire to establish compensatory control. For the most part, participants were not defensive or self-justifying. Instead, in both what was shared and how it was shared, the interviews took the form of conversations amongst men regarding shared knowledge. Thus, I did not feel as though I was interviewing up or interviewing down -- I felt as though I was interviewing across an assumed shared plane of experiences.

Ethics and Epistemic Responsibility

Before conducting the interviews for this research project, I sought ethical approval from the Brock University Social Science Research Ethics Board (REB). This ethics application included my letter of invitation, consent form, and interview guide (Appendix A). My initial letter of invitation provided an outline of this research project, the data collection procedure, the steps that I would take to ensure accuracy, confidentiality, and data security, the discussion topics, the anticipated outcomes and potential benefits of participation, and the contact information for the principal investigator, Dr. Francis, and the Research Ethics Office at Brock. On July 19 2013, this study received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board file number 12-289.

was about to speak with a member of a hard masculine cult. That is what it takes to make it to the level of CIS men’s basketball, right? Unexpectedly, however, the narratives told by participants forced me consider to my epistemic responsibility. Indeed, rather than monsters, I saw myself in the stories they chose to share. Just like me, these appeared to be men that were negotiating, resisting, and learning dominant discourses

across multiple sites. How, then, could I avoid constructing them as one-dimensional subjects in my analysis? How could I honour the apparent tension between their multiple selves? While I actively sought to avoid moralistic interpretations of their narratives, I continued to wonder: How am I examining the attitudes expressed in their stories differently from how I examine my own? What do I stand to gain, both personally and professionally, from the conclusions that I reach? It is my hope that a thoughtful consideration of these larger epistemological questions can be seen in the proceeding analysis.

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Chapter 5: “I don’t care what it takes”: Exploring Stuart’s Narrative of Embodied Complicity

In this chapter, I foreground the narrative told by Stuart, assistant coach for the USO men’s basketball team. Hegemony theorists have long called attention to sport as a social institution that functions to maintain the gender order (e.g. Bryson, 1987; Hargreaves, 2002; Messner, 1990). More than simply discursive violence, Messner (1990) was one of the first researchers to highlight the costs paid by male athletes who use their bodies as weapons in the sport arena. In this research project, the narrative told by Stuart most clearly highlights the significant personal health costs associated with a “win-at-all-costs” style of play. Despite these embodied costs, as a coach, Stuart appears committed to schooling his players in hard masculine lessons; a narrative that I name embodied complicity to highlight his role in enforcing a punishing regime of athletic performance associated with hard masculinity. To better understand his coaching identity, I draw on Foucault to explore the dominant discourses that helped structure Stuart’s early sporting experiences. After sketching the ways in which his internalization of these discourses allowed him to excel and eventually “move up ladder” into a gatekeeper position, I problematize Stuart’s continued embodied complicity as a coach and consider the gendered implications of these coaching practices. To make sense of this complex narrative, I conclude by calling attention to Stuart’s body talk.

Costs and Rewards

The son of a high school basketball coach, Stuart grew up surrounded by sport. At the age of six, he began playing organized basketball. After quickly excelling at the house

league level, Stuart began to participate in more competitive leagues. His first travel team coach, James, aided this transition. According to Stuart, James was “responsible for instilling certain characteristics in me.” When I asked Stuart to describe some of these characteristics, he noted:

Hard work, discipline, and responsibility. Those are probably the key ones. And that was every day. When you’re showing up, you’re showing up on time. You’re giving everything that you have. Basically, the hard work ethic was the main thing that was driven into me by him. Obviously, I don’t want to take anything away from my dad but for whatever reason, coming from James, he was kind of like a second voice. It was like ‘oh yeah Dad, dad, whatever,’ but coming from James it was like, ‘okay this is what has to get done if I want to go anywhere with basketball.’

Through control and discipline (e.g. compliments, accusations, rewards/punishments), coaches play a critical role in defining team norms (Mastroleo, Marzell, Turrisi, & Borsari, 2012). This response from Stuart calls attention to some of the ways in which James schooled Stuart in a discourse of sport that produced hard masculinity as the key to success. While his father perpetuated a similar discourse, here Stuart acknowledges that he was more willing to accept this neoliberal sporting ideal when it came from James.

With dreams of playing professional basketball, “I mean everybody’s goal is to go to the NBA,” Stuart began to shape his body in a manner that is emblematic of some of the dominant discourses that circulate in the sport arena. When discussing his style of play in high school, for example, Stuart noted:

If I needed to run through a wall, I was going to run through a wall because that would help us win. I would look at teammates who wouldn't sacrifice their bodies for the team and I would be like 'What are you doing? Why am I capable but you aren't?' Sorry, I shouldn't say you aren't capable. You might be capable of it, but you don't do it because you weren't taught the game the way I was.

This response calls attention to the ways in which coaches can function to school players in appropriate (i.e. violent) bodily performance. Male athletes do not “naturally” take up a hard masculine identity in the sport arena. Participating in sport requires “a series of body reflexive practices where one must negotiate and assess social understandings of appropriate bodily performance” (Wellard, 2002, p. 236). Hence, Stuart's “win at all costs” style-of-play is better understood as a form of “identity work” (Snow & Anderson, 1987).

At the same time, Stuart's style-of-play eventually led to significant personal health costs. Between the ages of fourteen and nineteen, amongst other injuries, he suffered eight concussions through his participation in various sports, including rugby, football, and basketball. Stuart's concussion problems began while attending a basketball camp the summer before he entered high school. During a game at this camp, Stuart took a charge that caused him to hit his head on the gym floor. Knocked unconscious from the impact, he was transported to the hospital on a stretcher and diagnosed with his first concussion. In high school, Stuart suffered five additional concussions. By the time Stuart entered the USO, then, he had already suffered six concussions.

Midway through his first year on the USO men's basketball team, Stuart suffered his seventh concussion. This injury occurred after Stuart sacrificed his body to take a charge. Noticing a parallel to the story he shared about his first concussion, I asked Stuart to talk about his continued willingness to take a charge:

Taking a charge, it's like you essentially give up your entire body for someone to run over you but it's the best play of the game because the person who ran over you gets a foul. Your team gets the ball back and a chance to go score. So, you've now stopped them from scoring and they get a foul -- which can result in more points.

Twenty-six years ago, Messner (1990) noted "one of the ultimate paradoxes of organized combat sports: top athletes, who are often portrayed as the epitome of good physical conditioning and health, are likely to suffer from a very high incidence of permanent injuries, disabilities, alcoholism, drug abuse, obesity, and heart problems." (p. 211). Why, then, do men continue to sacrifice their bodies in the sport arena? One explanation may be the discursive construction of pleasure. It appears that the discourse of gender that produces dominance as a metonym for masculinity allows some male athletes, such as Stuart, to understand their experiences of sporting pain as 'the best play of the game,' and thus, to experience embodied pain as satisfying and pleasurable.

Despite missing the second half of the season due to this injury, Stuart's style-of-play was validated by the coaches who voted him onto the Ontario University Athletics West All-Rookie team. On returning to the team the next season, Stuart suffered his eighth concussion. This injury occurred after Stuart tripped over the feet of an opposing

player and hit his head on both another opponent's knee and the gym floor. Despite the significant impact, Stuart remained conscious and the play continued around him. As he made his way to the bench, he knew that something was wrong. At the same time, however, he also knew that he would not be allowed to play the next game if the coaching staff suspected that he had suffered a concussion. Using his knowledge of the concussion protocol, Stuart provided the athletic trainers with the "correct" answers to their questions – masking his symptoms and allowing him to return for the next game.

In the second quarter of the next game, just six days later, Stuart suddenly became unaware of his surroundings. Scared, he went to the bench and told the coaching staff about his lingering symptoms from the previous game. Three months later, after consulting with a neurologist and undergoing an MRI, which showed no signs of brain damage, Stuart was medically cleared to resume physical activity. The USO, however, would not let him return to the team, in part because of his unwavering commitment to hard masculinity in the sport arena:

I didn't really have an on-off switch while I was playing. I played and I played a certain way. And because I played a certain way I ended up getting too many concussions and I couldn't play anymore. One of the main reasons that [the USO] wouldn't let me play anymore is because they knew if I went out I wasn't going to change the way I played and I would probably get another [concussion]. That was just kind of my drive. It was, 'Okay, I don't care what it takes, I'm going to get it done.'

No longer allowed to play, his head coach offered him a position on the coaching staff -- and would not take “no” for an answer. Stuart explained, “He told me he didn’t really want to see me leave because he felt that I had a real knack for the game.” Then a second-year undergraduate student, Stuart accepted the offer and now, at the age of twenty-five, he has accumulated five years of coaching experience at the CIS level. Here, then, appears to be some of the significant costs and rewards of a devotion to hard masculinity in the sport arena and the ways in which this commitment can result in moving “up the ladder” into gatekeeper positions.

A Normalizing Agent

Participation in sport does not turn boys from blank slates into men with hard masculine identities. Male athletes are active agents in the identity building process -- negotiating, resisting, and learning dominant discourses across multiple sites. In this sense, coaches are often required to use disciplinary techniques to shape the subjectivities of their players. While discussing his coaching practices, the narrative told by Stuart provides insight into what these disciplinary techniques can look like:

As coaches, one of the things we can choose to do is not play you. We can bench you. And I think because guys are aware of this at a young age, they will conform until they have kind of figured out that ‘okay, maybe this is something that I don’t want to do.’ And, if I want to continue playing, then, this is what needs to happen.

More than passively providing his players with an aspirational model of masculinity, then, it appears that Stuart actively functions as a “supervisor” in the sport arena

(Markula, 2003); using disciplinary techniques, such as benching a player, to “reduce the gaps between deficiencies and preferred behaviours” (Gearity & Mills, 2012, p. 127).

While coaches are often schooled to equate well-disciplined players with success in the sport arena, the broader social, political, and economic consequences of their coaching practices should be considered.

To direct players to sacrifice their bodies, coaches most often rely on disciplinary techniques that function to produce hard masculine characteristics as admirable (e.g. aggression, dominance, and violence). As highlighted by the stories Stuart chose to share about James, players learn at a young age that they must be willing to embody these characteristics if they want to excel. Players who are unwilling to embody hard masculine characteristics are most often benched by their coaches or cut from the team. In this sense, the disciplinary techniques used by coaches also function to make specific versions of the male body more visible than others. As these male bodies align with the male bodies valued in our patriarchal capitalist society, critical sport researchers have conceptualized sport as a normalizing institution (Abdel-Shehid & Kalman-Lamb, 2011). Hence, given the centrality of sport to male culture in Western society, the narrative told by Stuart allows us to reflect on the ways in which hard masculine coaching practices set a standard for men through which violence (against oneself and others) becomes a normative behaviour. I argue that the body talk articulated by Stuart highlights this standard.

Body Talk

Before beginning this section, I will share a passage from Sparkes Before beginning this section, I will share a passage from Sparkes Before beginning this section, I will share a passage from Sparkes and Smith (2002) that informed my interpretation of Stuart's body talk:

The stories we are told, and the stories we learn to tell about ourselves and our bodies, are important in terms of how we come to impose order on our embodied experiences and make sense of events and actions in our lives. As individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives, they engage in a dynamic process of claiming identities, selves, and constructing lives. Furthermore, how individuals recount their histories (what they emphasize or omit) has a direct bearing on what they can claim of their lives. (p. 261)

If, as Connell (2005) suggests, the body is central to the constitution of masculinity, what happens to male athletes when they are no longer able to sustain their past embodied gendered identity? I explore this question through reflecting on the stories Stuart told about his sporting body. In the context of his significant sporting injuries, I was curious to understand how he now signifies his manhood.

Stuart's first attempt to reinscribe his sporting body involved telling a story that naturalized his hard masculine style of play; a discursive strategy commonly used by former male athletes (Messner, 1990). When discussing whether his "win-at-all-costs" style of play was learned or natural, for example, Stuart argued: "It was definitely natural. I mean maybe there were pieces that I did gather from my coaches. But my style of play, I think I just put myself in positions naturally because of my level of competitiveness."

Prior to this response, Stuart demonstrated a willingness to acknowledge the connection between his style of play and his experiences of sporting pain (e.g. “Because I played a certain way I ended up getting too many concussions and I couldn’t play anymore”). In this response, however, Stuart appears unwilling to acknowledge the connection between his style of play and the hard masculine lessons taught to him by his coaches.

One possible explanation for this may be the profound bond that often develops between coaches and their players. By naturalizing his style of play and, by extension, significant injuries, Stuart can maintain a comforting story about his coaches (Hall, 1992). Stuart’s negotiation of traditional coaching practices can be seen in the stories he chose to share about his father, who was also his high school basketball coach:

In high school, our relationship was interesting. And by that I mean it was really good when things were going really good and when things weren't going necessarily the greatest, and not necessarily for the team and not necessarily for me individually but if things weren't going as he pictured it, it definitely got a little dicey there. He would be harder on me, because on our high school team I was the best player. Similar to my travel team coach, [James], he always held me more accountable for my actions compared to the other guys on the team, which I thank them for because it helped me move on and build as a player.

In this response, Stuart appears to be attempting to reinscribe the hard masculine lessons taught to him by his coaches as essential to his eventual success -- both inside and outside the sport arena. As a teenager, Stuart won a bronze medal with his travel team at the Provincial Championship, a gold medal with Team Ontario at the National

Championship, and received numerous athletic scholarships offers from both CIS and NCAA member institutions. Without question, Stuart's ability to construct a comforting story about his coaches is made possible by these achievements. In other words, these achievements allow Stuart to avoid problematizing the hard masculine lessons taught him by his coaches and implicating the men that he appears to still admire in his experiences of sporting pain.

Corroborating a trend identified in the literature, Stuart's second attempt to reinscribe his sporting body involved telling a story that produced his experiences of sporting pain as beneficial or a route to self-improvement. A concussion is a traumatic brain injury. While symptoms can vary from person to person, Stuart shared that some of his "significant symptoms" including a "hazy" short-term memory, headaches, sensitivity to light, and no memory of his childhood before the age of seven. In response to these startling admissions, I asked Stuart whether he ever regrets participating in sport. Without hesitation, he replied:

No. No. Maybe some of those memories aren't there for me, but some of the best memories I have had are generally all from sport and creating relationships, going and traveling across the world and going to different places to play and meet different people. So, from that standpoint, no, I would never regret it.

After a brief pause, he continued:

Moving on, forward, even though I'm not playing anymore, which is really the thing I wanted to do most, playing sports and getting the concussions and not

being able to play anymore has now put me on a new path that I can continue probably longer than if I was going to play. Once you play, you can only play for so long and then what? Which is something I think athletes have a very hard time understanding. I went through a stage in my life where I was like, 'No, it's either play or there is nothing else worth it.' So now, the path that I'm on, it's like yeah, this is what I want to do. I'm 23 and I have three years of coaching experience already under my belt at the university level -- one of the highest levels in Canada. I can only kind of move forward on that path and that's what I want to do. I think that was all because of sport and because of certain circumstances within my life that have transitioned me into a different part of life that I didn't think I would have entered.

Unable to sustain his previously celebrated gendered identity, I interpret this response as an attempt by Stuart to signify his manhood by controlling the talk of his bodily pain. Messner (1990) found that for former male athletes, "to question their decisions to 'give up' their bodies would ultimately mean to question the entire institutionalized system of rules through which they had successfully established relationships and a sense of identity" (p. 212). For Stuart, then, who still operates within the sport arena, questioning his decision to sacrifice his body would also mean questioning the institution that has provided him with significant material rewards -- both as a teenager and now as a young adult. In this sense, perhaps it is not surprising that Stuart was willing to tell story that works to reinscribe his experiences of sporting pain as instrumental to his current success.

Discussion

Stuart's narrative of embodied complicity highlights the significant material costs and rewards of a devotion to hard masculinity in the sport arena. In drawing on Foucault, I have demonstrated how the dominant discourses that helped to structure Stuart's early sporting experiences now direct his coaching practices and body talk. It is well documented that coaches often have a tremendous amount of influence over the attitudes and behaviours of their players (Mastroleo et al., 2012). Stuart's coaching practices and body talk – which reflect and re-inscribe the dominant narratives of athletic masculinities – suggest the importance of anti-violence activists considering how they might design programming to help coaches better understand their bodies as social objects and the broader gendered implications of producing hard masculinity as admirable in the sport arena.

Chapter 6: “Unless you’re Nike”: Exploring Brian’s Narrative of Aspirational Resistance

In this chapter, I centre the narrative of aspirational resistance told by Brian, head coach for the USO men’s basketball team. As the only participant in this research project with a child, the narrative told by Brian offers unique insights into the apparent tensions between the subject positions of “father” and “coach.” Through the stories shared about his approach to fathering, Brian demonstrated a well-developed analysis of the limitations of traditional gender norms in the home. As head coach, however, Brian’s gender consciousness is seemingly at odds with the “win-at-all-costs” ethos of CIS men’s basketball. Drawing on Foucault, then, I will sketch the institutional pressures and relations of power that shape Brian’s coaching practices and call attention to the ways in which he attempted to produce himself as an ethical subject in the sport arena.

Gender Consciousness

Brian first developed a theoretical awareness of feminism while studying sociology as an undergraduate student in university. A decade later, Brian began to understand the practical implications of feminist theory following the birth of his first child, Breea; corroborating a well-developed theme in the literature that suggests men develop a greater gender consciousness as they age and/or accumulate life experiences – such as becoming a father (Messner, 1990; Pringle & Hickey, 2010; Thorpe, 2010). Like many first-time parents, Brian and his partner Andrea were overwhelmed with the support they received from friends and family members following Breea’s birth. As their house became filled with pink coloured toys and clothes, however, Brian began to reflect

on the sociology courses he had taken a decade earlier. Cognizant of the connection between traditional gender roles and women's subordination, he became determined to provide Breea with a "balance." I asked Brian to describe what this "balance" looks like in practice:

She's got police cars, fire trucks, she's got dump trucks that she plays with, Lego, all that stuff. She's also got dolls and cell phones. ... I'm hyper-aware of pushing her to one side or the other. I don't like the imbalance so I try not to teach that to my child. I want her to be able to go and play with a doll, or go and read a book, and then come out and shoot five hundred shots, dribble around people, be tough to the basket, and score strong.

Following this response, Brian proudly pulled his phone out of his pocket to show me a picture of Breea doing a push-up. To be sure, the stories shared by Brian about his approach to fathering most often produced him as an ethical subject in the home.

Brian's gender consciousness can also be seen in his unique definition of manhood. In this research project, many participants conflated the concepts of sex and gender when asked to articulate their understanding of what it means to be a man. Alex, one of the student-athletes, suggested that "being a man" means:

To be able to provide for your loved ones, to be strong, to not be dependent on others, and to just man up and get it done ... That's what I think a man is. Not always whining or asking for help.

When asked the same question, however, Brian responded:

What does it mean to be a man? To me? Having a penis. That's it. Honestly, to me, that's it. There's no such thing. I understand social perspectives of what a man should be and what men do in our society but I look at myself as a person. And I think, you the same. And a woman could have the same qualities and traits as you or I. So what separates us besides physical anatomy?

Admittedly, Brian's response perpetuates a discourse of gender essentialism that reflects a perspective where many transgender and intersexed men would likely not "make the grade" as "real men." This response nevertheless demonstrates a critical departure from the overwhelmingly masculinist responses articulated by other participants in this research project. In this sense, I chose to begin this chapter with this section to highlight the ways in which Brian can be read as a resisting subject -- especially within his own heterosexual family.

As our conversation shifted from his family to his team, however, Brian became unable to sustain a comforting story of self (Hall, 1992). In discussing how his players might define masculinity, for example, Brian was forced to acknowledge the active role he sometimes plays in regulating the subjectivities of his players:

They might say being tough. They might say stepping up and handling your business. And we perpetuate that sometimes -- I'm sure I'm really guilty of it. ... I mean I can't say I completely perpetuate it, but there is that portion where I don't stop and say, 'Okay, guys. This is what I meant when I asked you to be tough. But, understand, to be a man you don't have to be...' I don't do that, I just

say ‘you gotta be tough, be a man, come on, be strong,’ so I am perpetuating it, whether I like it or not. But I’m not deliberate. I’m not a sociologist.

I interpret this quote as the first instance in the interview where Brian was forced to negotiate his multiple subject positions. This palpable tension in this response calls attention to what I understand as Brian’s ethical substance, which Foucault conceptualized as the aspect of one’s self that is morally problematic (O’Leary, 2006).

As subjects, Foucault argued that we are all engaged in a continuous process of producing our own ethical self-understanding (O’Leary, 2006). To reinscribe his ethical substance, and produce an ethical self-understanding of his coaching identity, Brian began to sketch the institutional pressures towards hard masculinity that direct his coaching practices: “I perpetuate [the dominant] idea of manhood because I’m in a game where I need them to be tough. It’s part of the game.” The narrative told by Stuart also called attention to these pressures:

In my position, I have to try any way I can to get my players to be a little more “male.” And by that I mean a little more edgy, a little more dirty -- to get on the floor and dive for loose balls. Because that’s what it takes to win. So, yeah you want to have fun but, at the end of the day, from a coach’s perspective, if your team is not winning then your job is on the line.

These responses highlight both Brian and Stuart’s primary mode of subjection, which conceptualized as the way in which one establishes oneself as obligated to follow a

specific moral code (O’Leary, 2006). To Brian and Stuart, the “win-at-all-costs” ethos of CIS men’s basketball necessitates schooling their players in hard masculine lessons.

Lapchick, Hoff, & Kaiser, 2010). Thus, as a racialized subject operating within a racist institution, Brian is forced to continuously negotiate White standards of masculinity.fucking country.” Like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), then, a racial hierarchy exists within CIS men’s basketball (Lapchick, Hoff, & Kaiser, 2010). Thus, as a racialized subject operating within a racist institution, Brian is forced to continuously negotiate White standards of masculinity.fucking country.” Like the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), then, a racial hierarchy exists within CIS men’s basketball (Lapchick, Hoff, & Kaiser, 2010). Thus, as a racialized subject operating within a racist institution, Brian is forced to continuously negotiate White standards of masculinity.

After sketching some of the relations of power that direct his coaching practices, the stories shared by Brian most often focused on reconciling the apparent contradictions between his multiple subject positions and producing himself as an ethical subject in the sport arena. Foucault (2012a) argued, “given a code of actions ... there are different ways for the acting individual to operate, not just as an agent, but as an ethical subject of this action” p. 26). Hence, it is the “process of negotiation that needs to be seen as important rather than the codes of behaviour themselves (Niesche & Haase, 2010, p. 3). I now focus my analysis on calling attention to the ways in which Brian attempted to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players.

Part of the Game of Life

Brian's first attempt to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players involved producing hard masculinity as central to both his survival as a youth and upward social mobility as an adult. After arguing that hard masculinity is "part of the game," Brian then suggested that it is also "part of the game of life too -- you need to be tough." This response must be understood in the context of familial experiences of poverty, racism, transnational migration, and violence. Born to immigrant parents from Ghana, Brian grew up as a racialized member of the working-class in the Regent Park neighbourhood of Toronto. While emphasizing the community aspect of this neighbourhood, he nonetheless constructed Regent Park as "a community where there was violence and people fought over territory that wasn't theirs." Brian attributed his ability to avoid gang life to basketball and the hard masculine lessons taught him by his coaches:

In high school, I knew that if I wasn't playing basketball I wouldn't be going to school. It was my motivation for going to class. But I don't think I really understood how important it was. Looking back, I can now see how my coaches helped me to develop the characteristics that I needed to survive growing up in that type of environment and, ultimately, get this job. I wouldn't be sitting here today without them.

Here, then, we can see how Brian's lived experience allow him to reconcile the apparent contradictions between his fathering and coaching practices.

I Won't Say "Don't be a Bitch"

Brian's second attempt to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players involved producing himself as a resisting subject through the problematization of traditional coaching practices. When discussing the gendered language traditionally used by coaches to discipline their players, for example, Brian suggested:

There's no question that it certainly deepens their socialization. So what I mean by that is that every time a coach says, 'don't be a pussy,' well, first of all, there's something wrong with that because we are saying that there is something wrong with being a woman and we reinforce what a woman should be. And we further separate people, when we talk about guys versus girls, we further separate them. Guys are supposed to be tough and strong and hard and girls are supposed to be soft, gentle and weak.

Given his articulated awareness of the connection between dominant discourses and gender inequalities, I asked Brian to discuss the language he might use to discipline a player:

I tend to use weakness, I would say don't show any weakness, 'cause again, there's no association to gender there. Weakness is typically a big one that we would look at. ... I won't say 'don't be a bitch,' 'don't be a pussy,' we just say 'fuckin' stop showing weakness,' 'no negative emotion.' No negative emotion because it takes away from your focus, it takes away from your ability to perform or your ability to communicate with your team or to be effective, really. So we deter that and we just lay that out.

Intrigued by this response, I then asked Brian if he had ever spoken to his players about the apparent parallel between the need for effective communication “on the court” and “in the bedroom.”

For sure, that’s something I try to do. I always try to give real examples from my personal life with them about relationships. I always say, ‘you don’t have to agree with your partner all the time, you’re going to disagree on things, but you’re going to have to still find ways to communicate.’ So, yeah, I talk about things like that with them and draw parallels to sport. Like, sometimes they might be mad at a teammate but you still gotta keep playing, you still got to keep trying to accomplish your goal.

Here, then, are a series of responses that produce Brian as a resisting subject in the sport arena. This identity work is made possible by Brian’s gender consciousness and willingness to problematize traditional coaching practices.

Unless You’re Nike

Brian’s third attempt to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players involved producing himself as powerless to challenge existing gender inequalities. In discussing his use of gender-neutral language in the sport arena, Brian acknowledged that he sometimes uses the phrase “you’re being soft” to discipline his players. Due to our pre-existing informal relationship, I felt comfortable challenging Brian about his use of this gendered phrase. He responded:

If I say, ‘you’re being soft,’ I’m aware to not associate that to a female’s body parts or to gender at all ... If we took away what they already know and how they’ve been socialized, it wouldn’t have any significance. But because they’ve already been socialized a certain way they equate soft, and most people do, to girls, to women. Right? ... There’s already that preconceived idea that masculinity is about strength and power ... Nike’s telling them to be bigger, stronger, and faster ... Nike’s telling them to win and dominate, that’s what being a man is. ... You’re up against every thirty seconds of their lives. Every thirty seconds you’re losing. ... I mean, these are ongoing issues, they’ll never get solved. It’s like the whole thing about ‘a village to raise a child.’ it’s everybody; everyone’s gotta shift -- unless you’re Nike.

In this quote, Brian calls attention to the intersection of capitalist and patriarchal ideals by highlighting how a multinational corporation such as Nike functions to maintain a specific version of masculinity. To justify his own complicity, however, Brian then suggests that Nike alone can transform relations of power. In doing so, this response perpetuates a discourse of neoliberalism that downplays the need for critical self-reflection and change at the community level.

In this research project, this was a common discursive strategy amongst participants – especially in relation to questions about men’s role in ending gender-based violence. Gord, a student-athlete on the USO men’s basketball team, argued:

I don’t support any violence against women. But there’ll always be guys that think they’re better than women. That’s just the way it is. I think a lot of it comes

from the media. Guys grow up always seeing images of men being more dominant. So, what can I do? I don't know. But I think that part of being a man is being accountable for what you do and understanding that being violent towards women is not okay -- so be accountable for your actions and don't do it. That's your decision to do that.

My analysis of this quote focuses on Gord's apparent desire to construct men who cause harm as "weak" or "lesser than." Indeed, this response produces the neoliberal idea of individual responsibility as a defining characteristic of manhood and the key to ending gender-based violence. In this context, men who cause harm are not "real men." The responses from both Brian and Gord, then, begin by offering a critical analysis of relations of power before using a discourse of neoliberalism to construct themselves as powerless to challenge existing gender inequalities.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Brian's final attempt to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players involved calling attention to his efforts to school his players in critical race lessons. When discussing the racial hierarchy that exists in CIS men's basketball, Brian noted:

I know that a lot of my players are Black and how I interact with them, what I do with them, how I carry myself, what they see of me, is important. I know it's important. Just like it's important for them to see different sides of me. That's why I'm going to invite them to my house for Thanksgiving dinner. Because it's

important for them, as young Black men, to see that not only do I coach basketball but I'm also a father. They need to see how I interact with my daughter. They need to see that.

In this response, Brian appears to be expressing a desire to use his position of power to challenge the idea that athletes should only be concerned with their sport and not with familial responsibilities -- including fatherhood. Due to his rare subject position as a Black head coach in CIS men's basketball, it appears that Brian is also articulating a further sense of responsibility to help redefine notions of Black masculinity for his Black players. Most notably, challenging the racist discourse that has historically constructed Black men as absent and deficient fathers.

Discussion

coaching practices, the narrative told by Brian calls attention to some of the ways in which he attempts to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players. Although the goal appears to be the production of himself as an ethical subject in the sport arena, the stories shared by Brian more often call attention to the complex agencies of coaches – especially those that are racialized and operating within racist and neoliberal institutions where the failure to win puts one's job “on the line.” coaching practices, the narrative told by Brian calls attention to some of the ways in which he attempts to negotiate his role as an active agent in the regulation of the subjectivities of his players. Although the goal appears to be the production of himself as an ethical subject in the sport arena, the stories shared by Brian more often call attention to the complex agencies of coaches – especially those that are racialized and operating

within racist and neoliberal institutions where the failure to win puts one's job "on the line."

Chapter 7: “It’s them looking out for you”: Exploring Docility as an Active Process

In this chapter, I explore the narratives of what I call active docility as told by the student-athletes in this research project. To begin, I provide an overview of the development of sport in Western society. Initially constructed as a (White) male preserve following the Industrial Revolution (IR), most contemporary Canadian sporting cultures are now accessible to women. Despite women’s recent entrance into male-only leagues, the narratives told by the student-athletes in this research project call attention to the continued circulation of gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies. In this context, hegemony theorists have historically constructed male athletes as passive members of a hard masculine cult: “These are men who tithe their agency and vow complacency to rigid team norms. As members of this cult, these men express near uniformity in thought and action -- reverent to the ideology of orthodox masculinity” (Anderson, 2010, p. 50). In contrast to this essentialist approach, my analysis in this chapter focuses on sketching some of the relations of power that direct male athletes to operate as docile agents in the sport arena.

In doing so, I hope to complicate the concept of docility. Docility should not be understood as synonymous with the abandonment of agency. Following Mahmood (2001), I understand docility as “the malleability required of someone to be instructed in a particular skill or knowledge -- a meaning that carries less a sense of passivity and more that of struggle, effort, exertion, and achievement” (p. 210). The stories shared by the student-athletes in this research project highlight some of the ways in which male athletes actively negotiate their feelings of ambivalence towards team norms to access the

profound feelings of pleasure associated with achieving an appropriate masculine identity and a sense of belonging within the heteronormative brotherhood of their team.

Background

Due to its characterization as an apolitical practice, sociologists largely ignored sport for most of the 20th century (Carrington, 2013). In the 1980s, feminist researchers began to question the “naturalness” of sport and problematize its intersection with broader vectors of power (Kidd, 1990; Bryson, 1987). Kidd (1990), for example, argued:

Sports as we know them today are not the natural, universal, and transhistorical physical activity forms they are commonly thought to be, played in roughly the same way by all peoples in all periods of human history; rather, sports comprise a family of different activities developed under the specific social conditions of rapidly industrializing nineteenth-century Britain and spread to the rest of the world through emigration, emulation and imperialism. (p. 33).

Prior to the IR, sport in Britain was primarily localized within the context of rural folk games that had variable rules and few governing bodies (Howell, 2015). Following the IR, the economic and cultural devaluation of White men’s physical strength triggered a crisis in White masculine identity (Messner, 1990). To combat the perceived feminization of middle and ruling-class British men, a movement arose to institutionalize their leisure pursuits (Wellard, 2002). By establishing standardized rules and governing bodies, these men transformed their leisure pursuits into (White) male preserves and institutions of

discursive violence that most frequently maintained aspirational models of (White) masculine subjectivity throughout the colonies.

During the 19th century, gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies functioned to justify women's exclusion from early sport cultures. Most notably, "male doctors and physical educators argued that humans had only a finite quantity of energy, which in the case of women was needed for reproduction" (Kidd, 1990, p. 35). An expression of benevolent sexism, this regime of truth functioned to construct women as objects of heterosexual (White) male desire and naturalized childbearing as women's vocation (Hekman, 2013). Hence, Theberge (1985) conceptualized women's exclusion from early sporting cultures as the "consolidation of contemporary patriarchal power" insofar as it provided men with social and physical control over women and the female body" (p. 196).

At the turn of the 20th century, the emergence of the women's suffrage movement challenged men's ability to overtly deny women access to sport. As sport was then thought to be a masculinizing institution, however, some men feared that women's entrance into male-only leagues would destabilize hetero-patriarchal notions of femininity and undermine the gendered division of labour. Consequently, separate leagues with modified rules were created for women. When women played basketball, for example, the court was divided into thirds and each player was only allowed to play two-thirds of the court. Female players were also required to pass the ball to a teammate after bouncing it twice (Howell, 2015). Another expression of benevolent sexism, this gendered practice allowed the achievements of female athletes to be dismissed in broader

society and ensured that the bodies of female athletes remained “feminine” (i.e. soft and not highly muscular and thus, available as the object of the heterosexual White male gaze).

At the same time, some male physical educators in Western Canada allowed women to participate in sport without modified rules during this period (Howell, 2015). Most famously, John Percy Page, a high school basketball coach at John MacDougall Commercial High School in Edmonton, Alberta, helped a group of women, many of whom were his former students, found the Commercial Graduates Basketball Club; commonly referred to as the Edmonton Grads. Between 1915 and 1940, the Edmonton Grads, playing against both men’s and women’s teams, compiled a record of five hundred and two wins and twenty losses. This remains the best record for any men’s or women’s, professional or amateur, basketball team in Canadian history. Playing by men’s rules and coached by a man, the success of the Edmonton Grads challenged the legitimacy of gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies. Women’s access to sport in Canada nonetheless remained restricted until the emergence of the women’s liberation movement in the second half of the twentieth century.

During the 1970s and 1980s, feminist athletes and activists in Canada began to challenge the legality of women’s exclusion from male-only leagues.² In 1981, a number

² <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/woman-recalls-charter-fight-to-play-boys-hockey-1.1187120>

of these women founded the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women and Sport and Physical Activity (CAAWS); a non-profit organization dedicated to advocating for gender equity in sport. Despite these efforts, women continue to be underrepresented in contemporary Canadian sporting cultures. Approximately 512,000 people play basketball over the age of fifteen in Canada, however, only 15.2 percent of these participants identify as women (Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 2010). To better understand the continued erasure of female athletes, I will now explore the narratives told by the student-athletes in this research project, which call attention to the continued circulation of gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies.

Dunking and the Gender Order

In this research project, the student-athletes were asked to discuss their perception of female basketball players. In analyzing these stories, an unexpected theme emerged: dunking. Indeed, when discussing their perception of female basketball players, many of the student-athletes in this research project chose to acknowledge the legitimacy of women's basketball before naturalizing men's basketball dominance by calling attention to men's "natural" ability to dunk. As discussed, gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies have historically functioned to construct women as non-serious athletes. In recent years, however, several highly visible female basketball players, such

as Becky Hammon, have once again begun to challenge the legitimacy of this gendered distinction.

A retired Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) player, Hammon is an assistant coach for the San Antonio Spurs of the NBA. In 2014, Hammon became the first, full-time, female assistant coach in any of the four major professional sports in North America. Hammon first developed an informal relationship with the Spurs coaching staff while playing for the San Antonio Stars of the WNBA from 2007-2014. This relationship formalized after Hammon suffered a season-ending knee injury during the first game of the 2013 WNBA season. Aware of her desire to become a coach after her playing career, the Spurs coaching staff invited Hammon to attend team meetings and practices while she rehabilitated her knee. Impressed by her contributions to the team over the course of the season, the Spurs eventually offered Hammon a position on their coaching staff. When asked about this decision, Greg Popovich, head coach for the Spurs, explained: "As a point guard, she's a leader, she's fiery, she's got intelligence, and our guys just respected the heck out of her... That's why we made her a full-time coach..." (Blackistone, 2015, July 24). In this quote, Popovich characterizes Hammon with sporting language historically reserved for male athletes. Indeed, in recent years, women's entrance into male-only leagues has forced some men to acknowledge the legitimacy of female athletes in public discourse.

Undoubtedly, the success and visibility of female athletes such as Hammon has challenged men's ability to construct gendered distinctions between the athletic motivations of men and women. In this research project, the student-athletes told stories

about female basketball players that demonstrated an awareness of this shift in societal norms. Rather than focusing on their athletic motivations, many of the student-athletes in this research project chose to tell stories that acknowledged the legitimacy of female basketball players. When asked to discuss his perception of female basketball players, for example, Alex argued: “Women’s basketball is no joke. All the female basketball players that I know, they work and play hard but, no offense, men’s basketball is a different game ‘cause men can do things naturally that women can’t do -- like being able to dunk.” When asked the same question, Kevin noted: “Women’s basketball has come a long way and it doesn’t get enough respect, for sure, but there will always be things that women can’t do that men can do naturally. Let’s see, like men can dunk and there is only one or a couple of women that can dunk.” In both quotes, Alex and Kevin begin by offering praise for women’s basketball players before perpetuating a discourse of biological reductionism that uses some men’s ability to dunk to construct women as, categorically, less “naturally” athletic than men. In this sense, while women are now socially able to participate in basketball, it appears that some men are determined to construct new biological barriers for female basketball players that are harder for women to challenge and thus, function to maintain men’s basketball as a male preserve.

Without question, the stories told about female basketball players by the student-athletes in this research project function to perpetuate gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies that have historically contributed to women’s erasure from sport. In this context, perhaps it is not surprising that hegemony theorists have tended to characterize male athletes as non-agentic beings (Anderson, 2010). Nonetheless, I will

now explore the relations of power that direct some men to operate as docile agents in the sport arena to complicate this dangerously simplistic narrative about male athletes.

Indeed, rather than cult members, my analysis will focus on examining male athletes as men with complex agencies.

A Sense of Belonging

To develop a more nuanced analysis of the narratives told by the student-athletes in this research project, I reflected on my own lived experience with sport. Growing up in rural northern Ontario, I played hockey from the age of four until fourteen – when a torn patellar tendon in my left knee led me to pursue other interests. More than the trophies or awards that I won, I most fondly remember the unique bond that I had with my teammates. We did everything together: practices before school, mini-sticks during recess and lunch, street hockey after school, games and tournaments on the weekends. Not to mention the various team parties and events organized each season by our parents. Through these collective experiences, I was able to develop some of my first meaningful homosocial bonds.

In this research project, I asked the student-athletes to reflect on what they appreciated most about their lived experience with sport. In response, many chose to tell stories about their unique bond with teammates. Rather than simply collective experiences, however, these stories centered collective experiences of pain as central to the creation of meaningful homosocial bonds amongst male athletes. Demoi, for example, noted:

We're connected in the sense that all the challenges we face together in the sport-- we're experiencing it together. So, when you really think about it, if you're feeling, 'Oh my goodness. Coach is killing us.' You have a set of thirteen guys doing the same thing, experiencing the same pain, experiencing the same emotions you are. And that's where the connection grows strong, like, all right; we're in this together. In it for the worst, in it for the best. It's a brotherhood, man.

My analysis of this response focuses on Demoi's interpretation of his sporting pain as pleasurable. Despite his apparent ambivalence, rather than problematizing the disciplinary techniques of his coaches, Demoi chose to tell a story that reinscribed the pain associated with traditional coaching practices as central to the creation of meaningful homosocial bonds and thus, pleasurable. Here, then, is an example of how some male athletes actively negotiate their feelings of ambivalence towards team norms.

Gord argued:remaining male preserves. When asked to discuss what he appreciates most about his lived experience with sport, for example, Gord argued:remaining male preserves. When asked to discuss what he appreciates most about his lived experience with sport, for example, Gord argued:

There are not a lot of situations nowadays where you are going to be with ten to twenty guys that you are going to see every day and become really good friends with and work with. I think that sport is pretty unique in that sense -- where you get to create lifelong relationships with a bunch of different guys that in other situations you really wouldn't have that opportunity.

In our heteronormative society, a discourse of gender produces men's desire for homosocial bonding as unnatural. Thus, most heterosexual men are schooled to either suppress this desire or find an acceptable space to engage in acts of physical intimacy with other men. Historically, sport has most often been constructed as a male preserve wherein "the violence eliminates [or, perhaps, mediates] homoerotic elements" (Messner, 1990, p. 89). Given the limited number of alternative acceptable spaces, the discourse of gender that produces men's desire for homosocial bonding as unnatural also directs male athletes to operate as docile agents in the sport arena -- as any other choice might endanger their ability to achieve a sense of belonging within the heteronormative brotherhood of the team. In this sense, the narratives told by the student-athletes in this research project call attention to some of the relations of power that shape the identity negotiations of male athletes.

The Locker Room

Though I have forgotten many of their names, I will never forget the feeling of sitting in a locker room surrounded by my teammates. While locker rooms can be spaces of marginalization, I have found that they can also be spaces of profound pleasure. It did not matter if we were four hours away from home or at our local rink – the locker room most often felt like a second home. With my teammates at my side, I felt free to express myself through laughter before early morning practices, silence before big games, or tears after crushing losses. Similarly, alongside collective experiences of pain, many of the student-athletes in this research project told stories that centred men's interactions in the

locker room as central to the creation of meaningful homosocial bonds amongst male athletes. Kevin, for example, shared:

[The locker room is] somewhere you can get away and focus in on you or your sport. If you don't want to talk to anyone, you can just go in and be by yourself. Or, if your teammates come in, they are like brothers so you can talk to them and share what needs to be said and then you go on your way. I have probably shown all my emotions in the locker room because you don't need to put on an act in there. You can just do you and know that your teammates will have your back.

Rather than the result of, what Foucault called, practices of resistance, Kevin's perceived ability to make himself vulnerable amongst his teammates in the locker room is more likely because it is a heteronormative space where his standing as a "real man" is relatively assured (Pickett, 1996).

At the same time, men's homoerotic interactions in the locker room can cause homosexual panic in some heterosexual male athletes. Gord, for example, spoke about his teammate's use of the phrase "no homo:"

I'll make a sexual joke to somebody in the locker room and they'll be like 'ahh man, no homo.' I'm like, 'I'm not gay, I don't need to say no homo.' And I'll make fun of them for saying 'no homo' like, 'why do you gotta say no homo?' I think that when you are around a bunch of dudes all the time, guys want to make sure nobody thinks that they're gay.

In this quote, Gord highlights how some men use homophobic slurs to emphasise their manhood in the locker room. Later in our interview, Gord suggested that men's perceived need to use the phrase "no homo" when interacting with teammates in the locker room: "reflects a lot on the insecurity of guys." By calling attention to the root of this harmful discursive practice (i.e. men's fear of being seen as "abnormal" by other men), Gord was able to connect men's homophobic violence against other men in the sport arena to the discourse of gender that produces men's desire for homosocial bonding to be unnatural.

This context sets the scene for the profound pleasure available to male athletes willing to operate as docile agents in this heteronormative space and shapes how some of the student-athletes chose to articulate their feelings of ambivalence towards the pervasive sexist language in the locker room. Jarvis, as an example, suggested:

It can be pretty brutal. They obviously make comments like "I wanna bang her blah blah blah." But, you know, being a male athlete in the locker room, you're used to it. As long as they're not talking about my sister or my mom like that then I don't really care. You've heard it a million times, what difference is it gonna make when you've heard it two million times?

In the same way, Gord argued:

I mean I have a girlfriend so I recognize that it's not great, but it's a locker room full of fifteen male athletes. If you put fifteen highly masculine guys in a room together -- we're going to talk about what we did the night before with certain girls and we're going to call guys pussies. I've been playing for a long time and

that's always been there. Growing up an athlete and always being seen in a certain way, you act a certain way. We have a great group of guys on our team, so I wouldn't say they are necessarily sexist. It's just kind of the way it is.

In these responses, Jarvis and Gord negotiate their discomfort with sexist "locker room talk" through a discourse of fatalistic passivity (e.g. I've been playing for a long time and that's always been there... It's just kind of the way it is."). By drawing on this discourse, Jarvis and Gord can justify their inaction (e.g. "You've heard it a million times, what difference is it gonna make when you've heard it two million times?"). Rather than what was said, however, I chose to foreground these responses to highlight the silences.

In both quotes, Jarvis and Gord articulate their feelings of ambivalence by choosing to defend only the women in their family or their intimate partners (i.e. "As long as they're not talking about my sister or my mom like that then I don't really care", "I mean I have a girlfriend so I recognize that it's not great..."). Despite their apparent awareness of the potential personal impact, noticeably absent is a willingness to discuss the broader social impact of sexist "locker room talk." Once again, then, these responses call attention to both how male athletes actively negotiate their feelings of ambivalence towards team norms and how the pleasure of belonging within the heteronormative brotherhood of the team may direct some men to operate as docile agents in the sport arena. In this sense, the narratives told by the student-athletes in this research project corroborate Connell's (2005) concept of men's patriarchal dividend, which suggests that most men are only required to passively acquiesce to the norms of hegemonic masculinity rather than actively embody them.

A Sense of Identity

For many young men, “to race or to shoot a puck is not only to exercise a skill, but to embody, express and elaborate a complex code about self and culture -- in short, to acquire an identity” (Kidd, 1996, p. 5). This was certainly true for me. Growing up, I felt a great sense of pride playing hockey. My father played hockey, my friends played hockey, but more importantly -- my sisters did not. This made sense to me. Across multiple sites, dominant discourses of gender had schooled me to understand masculinity and femininity as singular and oppositional concepts. As a result, if my sisters were interested in something, I wanted nothing to do with it. Fortunately for me, they wanted nothing to do with hockey. But, why would they? Hockey was for men. And, how did I learn this? Every Saturday night, my father and I would go down to our basement to watch the Toronto Maple Leafs

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For many young men, “to race or to shoot a

puck is not only to exercise a skill, but to embody, express and elaborate a complex code about self and culture -- in short, to acquire an identity” (Kidd, 1996, p. 5). This was certainly true for me. Growing up, I felt a great sense of pride playing hockey. My father played hockey, my friends played hockey, but more importantly -- my sisters did not. This made sense to me. Across multiple sites, dominant discourses of gender had schooled me to understand masculinity and femininity as singular and oppositional concepts. As a result, if my sisters were interested in something, I wanted nothing to do with it. Fortunately for me, they wanted nothing to do with hockey. But, why would they? Hockey was for men. And, how did I learn this? Every Saturday night, my father and I would go down to our basement to watch the Toronto Maple Leafs lose on Hockey Night in Canada while my mother sat upstairs reading a book. When I would ask her if she wanted to join us, she would tell me that hockey was too violent for her. I can remember playfully teasing her about this. I can also remember quickly running back downstairs before the commercial break ended to take my place at my father’s side -- where, as a boy, I felt that I belonged. For me, then, playing hockey was more than about self-mastery -- it was about performing an appropriate gendered identity. It was about learning to become a “real man.”

In this research project, many of the student-athletes shared similar stories about their understanding of basketball. When asked to reflect on why so few women participate in basketball, for example, Jarvis argued: “Well, most of the women who play basketball do it because they want to have a good time. It’s something else for them to

do. Whereas with guys, there's a natural passion for the game, you know?" Seeking clarification, I asked Jarvis to expand on this response:

Okay, for example, if you have a girlfriend who plays basketball and you two end up getting married. It's like you learned valuable life lessons through basketball and she just played it for fun. You know what I mean? You learned who you are based on your experiences in basketball, and she just kind of did it for herself.

In this quote, I interpret Jarvis as attempting to construct basketball as a gendered practice that is meant to school young men and boys in the hard masculine lessons required to become "real men" (e.g. "You learned valuable life lessons through basketball"). Given that this is perceived by Jarvis to be the "true" purpose of the game, female basketball players can then be seen as non-serious players and somewhat self-indulgent participants (e.g. "She just kind of did it for herself").

As many men perceive sport to be a masculinizing institution, the disciplinary techniques used by coaches can often be interpreted as benevolent. When asked to discuss their experiences with traditional coaching practices, for example, the student-athletes in this reach project rarely told stories that problematized the attitudes and behaviours of their coaches. Alex, for example, shared:

If a coach tells you "don't be a pussy," maybe the emotion you're feeling at the time is, like, "man, take it easy yo, it's just a game." It isn't positive -- it's not the best way you could talk to your players. But, that's just the culture we're around

now. You're not going to get anywhere by bitching about it, it really does nothing for you. At the end of the day, it's them looking out for you.

Like the stories about sexist “locker room talk” told by Jarvis and Gord, I understand this response as an attempt by Alex to downplay his discomfort with traditional coaching practices through a discourse of fatalistic passivity (e.g. “That's just the culture we're around now. You're not going to get anywhere by bitching about it, it really does nothing for you”).

It is the final line of this quote, however, that I find most interesting: “At the end of the day, it's them looking out for you.” Indeed, the student-athletes in this research project most often told stories that expressed a sense of appreciation towards the hard masculine lessons taught to them by their coaches. When asked to discuss how his involvement in sport has shaped his understanding of what it means to be a man, for example, Nick argued:

Well, being a man is just like not being soft, you know? You can't be emotional, it's just one of those things where you've gotta be like a rock almost, the way I see it. And sport has helped me to understand that. You can't give up. You can't complain. If you do, you're not going to play. Same thing in life. You have to learn to take a beating and then get right back up. It's just one of those things that sport teaches you.

In this sense, perhaps it is not a surprise that the student-athletes chose to reinscribe the attitudes and behaviours of their coaches as benevolent – as any other choice might

endanger their spot on the team (“You can’t give up. You can’t complain. If you do, you’re not going to play”) and thus, their ability to construct an appropriate masculine identity. Some men’s decision to operate as docile agents in the sport arena must also be understood in the context of race and racism. Beyond sport, middle and ruling-class White male youth often have access to several other dominant social institutions through which they can construct an appropriate masculine identity. For many racialized male youth, however, sport may be perceived as the only dominant social institution through which they can access the discursive resources necessary to signify themselves as “real men.”

Discussion

For many of the student-athletes in this research project, it appears that sport is perceived to be a male preserve and masculinizing institution. In this sense, some men may interpret women’s recent entrance into male-only leagues as a threat to their ability to use sport as a space to achieve an appropriate masculine identity and/or develop meaningful homosocial bonds. Given the profoundness of these pleasures, I have suggested that perhaps it should not come as a surprise that some of the student-athletes in this research project chose to perpetuate gendered discourses about female athletes and bodies that have historically contributed to women’s erasure from sport. At the same time, I have also sought to sketch some of the relations of power that direct male athletes to operate as docile agents in the sport arena. Rather than passive members of a cult of hard masculinity, the stories shared by student-athletes in this research project call attention to some of the ways in which male athletes actively negotiate their feelings of

ambivalence towards team norms to access the profound feelings of pleasure associated with achieving an appropriate masculine identity and a sense of belonging within the heteronormative brotherhood of their team. In this sense, these are not men that have been tricked or coerced into performing hard masculinity in the sport arena. Moving forward, then, how can we work to provide male athletes with alternative pleasures? And how are the possibilities for these alternative pleasures shaped by a sporting culture are wherein “winning at all costs” is a hard masculine and neoliberal ideal that coaches push towards?

Research Chapter 8: Reflecting on the Complex Agencies of Male Athletes and Their Coaches

In this research project, I interviewed members of the USO men's basketball team to explore the relationship between sport, discursive constructions of dominant masculinities, and gender-based violence. These interviews centred on developing a more nuanced understanding of how male student-athletes and their coaches' experience, perceive, and perform masculinities. Currently, much of the critical sport literature uses the concept of hegemonic masculinity as a lynchpin in its theoretical framework and thus, constructs sport as a monolithic social institution and male athletes as non-agentic beings (Anderson, 2010). In contrast, guided by a Foucauldian and feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework, I sought to use the data I gathered in my qualitative interviews to sketch key narratives regarding how male athletes talk about masculinities, sport and gendered embodiment. My hope is that these narratives might provide some insights into the ways activists could develop appropriate anti-violence programming to engage male student-athletes and their coaches as men with complex agencies.

Findings and Interpretations

This research project took many unexpected turns. Most notably, I did not set out to interview coaches. As a graduate student and campus-based anti-violence activist, I was initially interested in working with student-athletes. Through the process of gaining access to the USO men's basketball team, however, I developed an informal relationship with Brian and Stuart. As noted, my decision to interview Brian and Stuart was initially driven by my desire to use their narratives to make sense of the stories told by their

players as well as provide insights into new ways to engage male student-athletes as leaders in ending gender-based violence on campus. To my surprise, however, the narratives told by the Brian and Stuart forced me to consider the complex agencies of both male athletes and their coaches; and ultimately, led to a shift in the direction of this research project.

Theme 1: Embodied Complicity

Stuart's narrative of embodied complicity called attention to the continued relevance of Sabo's (1986) pain principle, which suggests that self-sacrifice is required to excel in the sport arena. Using one's body as a weapon against other participants, however, often results in violence against oneself (Messner, 1990). Indeed, while sport is most often produced as a site for the development of men's physical health, the narrative told by Stuart highlights the ways in which sport also functions as a site for the degradation of men's bodies (Naess, 2001; Vaccaro, Klein, Ciccoti, Pfaff, Moulton, Hilibrand). Stuart's narrative of embodied complicity called attention to the continued relevance of Sabo's (1986) pain principle, which suggests that self-sacrifice is required to excel in the sport arena. Using one's body as a weapon against other participants, however, often results in violence against oneself (Messner, 1990). Indeed, while sport is most often produced as a site for the development of men's physical health, the narrative told by Stuart highlights the ways in which sport also functions as a site for the degradation of men's bodies (Naess, 2001; Vaccaro, Klein, Ciccoti, Pfaff, Moulton, Hilibrand). Stuart's narrative of embodied complicity called attention to the continued relevance of Sabo's (1986) pain principle, which suggests that self-sacrifice is required to excel in the sport arena. Using

one's body as a weapon against other participants, however, often results in violence against oneself (Messner, 1990). Indeed, while sport is most often produced as a site for the development of men's physical health, the narrative told by Stuart highlights the ways in which sport also functions as a site for the degradation of men's bodies (Naess, 2001; Vaccaro, Klein, Ciccoti, Pfaff, Moulton, Hilibrand, & Watkins, 2002). By calling attention to the paradox of the pain principle, the body talk articulated by Stuart revealed a contradiction in the dominant discourse of sport and men's health. As a player, Stuart suffered eight concussions through his participation in various sports before being forced to retire as a second-year student-athlete – in part, due to his unwavering commitment to hard masculinity in the sport arena. As discussed, Stuart shared that some of his “significant symptoms” include a “hazy” short-term memory, headaches, sensitivity to light, and no memory of his childhood before the age of seven. Like Pringle (2007), then, the narrative told by Stuart works to question the regime of truth about the purported physical health benefits of sport participation for men.

At the same time, the narrative told by Stuart also called attention to the benefits of embodying hard masculinity in the sport arena. After being forced to retire as a second-year student-athlete, Stuart's unwavering commitment to hard masculinity allowed him to “move up the ladder” into a gatekeeper position on the coaching staff. As a coach, Stuart now appears to school his players in the same hard masculine lessons taught to him by his coaches. This is concerning as the body talk articulated by Stuart, which worked to naturalize his “win-at-all-costs” style of play and offered praise towards the disciplinary techniques used by his former coaches, raises strong doubts about his

willingness to engage in the critical introspection required to take up practices of resistance in the sport arena. In this sense, the broader implications of coaches, such as Stuart, who maintain hard masculinity as a sporting ideal for men who are also struggling to understand gender equity and gendered violence should be further explored by researchers.

Theme 2: Aspirational Resistance

Brian's narrative of aspirational resistance highlights some of the ways in which racialized men negotiate their multiple subject positions within the larger athletic structures in which they operate. To begin the interview, Brian proudly shared multiple stories about his attempts to raise his daughter in ways that push beyond the gender binary – articulating an awareness of the connection between traditional gender roles and women's subordination. Indeed, Brian actively worked to construct himself as a resisting subject – especially within his own heterosexual family. As the interview shifted to the sport arena, however, Brian became unable to sustain his comforting story of self (Hall, 1992). As head coach, Brian's gender consciousness is seemingly at odds with the "win-at-all-costs" ethos of CIS men's basketball. To reconcile this apparent contradiction, Brian both sketched the power relations that direct his coaching practices and called attention to his practices of resistance. Brian's negotiation of his multiple and contradictory subject positions resulted in the construction of a rich narrative.

In choosing to highlight the narrative told by Brian, I hoped to call attention to the various tensions experienced by men, especially those that are racialized, operating within sport. Within the literature, male athletes and their coaches are too often produced

as non-agentic beings (e.g. Anderson, 2010). In this sense, Foucauldian researchers continue to call for the centring of counter narratives developed by male athletes and their coaches (Fitzclarence & Hickey, 1998; Sparkes, 1998). This is important as “dominant narratives available in a culture may act to shape not only who we think we are, but also who we think we can become in the future” (Phoenix & Sparkes, 2006, p. 109). Hence, the narrative told by Brian is important because it works to promote a “critical awareness of the complex relationships between sport, processes of racialization, and masculinities while simultaneously promoting circulation of alternative discursive resources that could allow for the (re)storying of lives, social practices, and relations” (Pringle & Markula, 2005, p. 492).

At the same time, I recognize that Brian also appears to be caught in larger athletic structures that seem to demand the facilitation of players with hard masculine identities. In this sense, Brian’s narrative of aspirational resistance suggests the limits of alternative modes of engendering in the sport arena (Hekman, 2013). Most notably, as one of two Black head coaches in Canada, Brian’s aspirations to broaden ideas of gender within the heterosexual family and to complexify ideas about Black masculinity are constrained by neoliberal ideals that shape the current “win-at-all-costs” culture and racism within CIS men’s basketball. Rather than focusing on the merit of his negotiations of gendered norms in the sport arena, then, I understand the narrative told by Brian as an important contribution to the ongoing conversation in the literature regarding the “possibilities [and limitations] of less problematic ways of engaging in sport” (Crocket, 2012, p. 22).

Theme 3: The Pleasure of Active Docility

When discussing their lived experiences with sport, the student-athletes in this research project most often shared stories that centered the profound feelings of pleasure associated with achieving an appropriate masculine identity and a sense of belonging within the heteronormative brotherhood of their team. Building on the work of Foucault, then, I explored pleasure as a productive force in the constitution of desiring sporting subjects (Pringle, 2009). As discussed, the profound pleasures available to men willing to operate as docile agents do not stem from “conscious, critical problematization of the boundaries of the male athletic self” (Markula

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operate as docile agents do not stem from “conscious, critical problematization of the boundaries of the male athletic self” (Markula, 2003, p. 105). Instead, these pleasures stem from the heteronormativity of sport at the institutional level. Nevertheless, this does not suggest that male athletes are non-agentic beings. Drawing on Connell’s (2005) concept of men’s patriarchal dividend, it is possible to understand male athletes as men that have chosen to accept their feelings of ambivalence towards team norms to achieve an appropriate masculine identity and/or a sense of belonging within the heteronormative brotherhood of their team.

Recommendations

The findings from this research project have implications for anti-violence activists working to engage male athletes as leaders in ending gender-based violence. Anti-violence activists must work to resist the essentialist narrative that suggests male athletes “naturally” take up hard masculine identities in the sport arena. As Pringle and Hickey (2010) noted, “identities are constructed in relation to the workings of power, life experiences and the availability of discursive resources” (p. 116). In this context, how might resistance to the workings of power articulated by participants in this research project be fostered? Stuart’s narrative of embodied complicity, for example, called attention to some of the ways in which young men and boys are schooled in hard masculine lessons through the disciplinary practices of their coaches. In designing strategies to engage male athletes, then, the findings of this research project suggest that it is important to consider the questions: How do the dominant discourses that circulate in

the sport arena function to shape the subjectivities of male athletes? And, what can be done to inspire male athletes and their coaches to challenge these discourses?

Participation in sport does not turn boys from blank slates into men with hard masculine identities. As noted in my discussion on ethics and epistemic responsibility in chapter three, and in my interpretation of Stuart's coaching practices in chapter four, the stories shared by student-athletes in this research project call attention to male athletes as active agents in the identity building process -- negotiating, resisting, and learning dominant discourses across multiple sites. In this sense, anti-violence activists must work to avoid approaching male athletes as non-agentic beings – tricked or coerced into performing hard masculinity in the sport arena. It is important to consider that some men are willing to operate as docile agents in exchange for feelings of heteronormative brotherhood. Why? “Precisely because some aspects of the exercise and experience of power are profoundly pleasurable” (Foucault, 1980, p. 34). How, then, can we, as anti-violence activists, help male athletes to be willing to consider alternative pleasures? And, to what extent is this possible within a “win-at-all-costs” sporting culture wherein the institutional pressures for taking up hard masculinity and its related denigration of women are considerable?

In the introduction to this research project, I sketched my initial engagement with feminist thought. In the second year of my undergraduate studies, I took a contemporary feminist research methods course taught by Dr. Francis. For the final paper, we were asked to unpack “interlocking forms of power” in our lives. As I connected my lived experience as a heterosexual White male youth from rural Northern Ontario to broader

socio-cultural experiences of men, I became aware of the larger scripts that I had unknowingly been performing. Learning to question the regimes of truth that I had been schooled in since birth was both a disorienting and pleasurable process. As Markula (2003) noted, “to be able to think differently creates an opportunity to question the limitations of one’s freedom instead of merely coping with one’s situation” (p. 101). Indeed, following this course, I used my burgeoning critical self-awareness to begin challenging the larger scripts that I had taken for granted. As I began to re-think assumptions I had accepted from childhood I developed a passion to talk with other men about the difficult pleasures of ethical engagement with gendered power.

The findings from this research project indicate there is a need for anti-violence activists to expose male athletes to alternative pleasures. To begin this process, male athletes must first be encouraged to engage in critical self-reflection. Stuart’s narrative of embodied complicity, for example, corroborated the existing critical sport literature that suggests male athletes tend to “naturalize” their athletic identities – regardless of the associated health costs (Messner, 1990; Young, White, & McTeer, 1994). Rather than an unwillingness or inability to think critically about the dominant discourses that circulate in the sport arena, this is more likely a result of the fact that most of the student-athletes in this research project “have not yet had the opportunity or the resourcing to connect their own experiences, explore alternative narratives, and form a collective story” (Sparkes & Smith, 2002, p. 280). Moving forward, then, anti-violence activists must work to provide male athletes with opportunities to engage in the critical self-reflection required to eventually explore the difficult pleasures of ethical engagement with gendered power. It should be noted that this engagement might place some male athletes into

conflict with their coaches and the “win-at-all-costs” ethos of some contemporary Canadian sporting cultures – such as CIS men’s basketball.

At the same time, I recognize that there are often institutional barriers that limit the possibilities for anti-violence initiatives’ sustained engagement with male student-athletes. In my role at SASC, I have worked with various men’s teams at Wilfrid Laurier University and the University of Waterloo. At both institutions, however, student-athletes are not currently mandated to complete an anti-violence training. Consequently, SASC is only able to provide a workshop for a team after a member of the coaching staff has contacted our agency. Leaving this responsibility to individual coaches is problematic. As highlighted by Stuart’s narrative of embodied complicity, coaches are most often former players that have been promoted into gatekeeper positions precisely because of their unwavering commitment to hard masculinity (Anderson, 2010). Given that individual coaches may have been rewarded for their performance of hard masculinity in the sport arena, these men may not yet be willing or able to divest from it. In this sense, there is an apparent need for athletic departments at CIS member-institutions to begin implementing policies that ensure all student-athletes complete an anti-violence training – and this commitment should not simply be left to coaches.

As I argued in this thesis, Brian’s narrative of aspirational resistance called attention to the relations of power within CIS men’s basketball that further necessitate the introduction of these policies. A resisting subject in the home, Brian spoke passionately about his desire to raise his daughter beyond the gender binary. In the sport arena, however, Brian’s gender consciousness is seemingly at odds with the institutional

pressures to “win-at-all-costs.” As a result, Brian’s coaching practices most often resemble traditional coaching practices, which are “more about making athletes obedient and responsible not critical, questioning, independent and creative – qualities that supposedly run counter to athletic excellence” (Denison, Mills, & Konoval, 2015, p. 8). Indeed, critical sport researchers have found that coaches are often unclear about the role that they should play in fostering critical self-reflection in their players and are unaware or conflicted about the ways in which their disciplinary techniques function to maintain a standard for men that has far-reaching social, political, and economic consequences (Denison et al., 2015). More than individual coaches, then, it appears that anti-violence initiatives should begin to approach administrators working within athletic departments at CIS member-institutions about developing policies that clarify expectations for student-athletes *and* their coaches around issues of gender-based violence. Exploring the possibilities and limitations of engaging these administrators in anti-violence work is one possible topic for future research.

Directions for Future Research

Given the complex agencies articulated by participants in this thesis, researchers should continue to explore the concepts of docility and ambivalence in future critical explorations of sport and masculinities -- especially in relation to the ways in which male athletes choose to accept team norms at the cost of reinscribing gendered power. At the same time, this research project has also demonstrated how institutional pressures related to racism, sexism, and neoliberalism often intersect to shape coaching and athletic practices within CIS men’s basketball. To better understand the possibilities and

limitations of ethical engagement with sport, researchers should also continue to explore the contradictory practices through which male athletes and the coaches actively negotiate these vectors of power.

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Appendix A: Letter of Information

Project Title: Engaging Male Athletes as Partners in Antiviolence Initiatives

Principal Investigator:
 Dr. Margot Francis
 Women and Gender Studies/Sociology Department
 Brock University
 905-688-5550 ext. 5381
 mfrancis@brocku.ca

Principal Student Investigator:
 Stephen Soucie
 M.A. Candidate
 Sociology Department
 Brock University
 905-932-2095
 ss08tx@brocku.ca

Introduction and Background:

You are being invited to participate in a research study that explores the role of male athletes in ending violence against women.

Stephen Soucie is conducting a research project that explores how male athletes understand, perform and experience masculinities and the links between these perceptions and ideas about gender based violence.

Procedures:

If you agree to be involved in this study, you will be asked to participate in one interview that will last approximately 60 minutes. The discussion will involve asking you about your experience within organized sport.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no negative implications.

Accuracy, Confidentiality and Data Security

Our discussion will be audio taped so as to accurately record all of your comments.

All aspects of our conversation will be treated confidentially. Only Stephen Soucie (and possibly Dr. Margot Francis) will hear the audio tape, or read the transcript. Neither your name nor other identifying characteristics will be associated with what you say. The

publications that result from this research may include quotations of things you say, but they will not include material that identifies you.

Please provide a pseudonym when you sign this form below.

The data from these interviews will be filed and stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years after the completion of this project at which point it will be destroyed.

Risks and Benefits

Some questions may cause mild emotional distress.

If while answering some of the questions you feel upset, please tell the interviewer and we can end this line of discussion. As noted above, you can stop your involvement in the research project at any time. If you find it necessary to seek support, here are two on-campus support resources that you may use – free of charge:

Brock Student Sexual Violence Support Centre (BSSVSC)

24-Hour Crisis/Support line: 289-990-7233

Send a text letting them know that you want a call and someone will phone you within 15 minutes. Volunteers on the other line are trained to be good listeners and entirely supportive. You can ask them anything and they will always be there, even if you just need someone to talk to. All phone calls stay anonymous. The BSSVSC also provides peer support, advocacy, accompaniments and court support.

Student Health Services

905-688-5550 x3243

Direct benefits to the participants include the potential for increased awareness of the potential for men to be involved in ending violence against women.

Discussion Topics

I have certain areas that I would like to talk about. However, I particularly want to understand the issues you think are important about the relationship between organized sport and dominant masculinities. I hope you would raise observations that you think should be discussed at any time.

Outcomes and Potential Benefits of this research

By participating in this research you will be contributing to understanding the role of masculinities in organized sport.

I hope this research will provide useful information and analysis about how participants in organized sport can help to redefine notions of what it means to be a man in today's society. Overall the objective of this research is to explore how male athletes talk about and understand the lived experience of masculinities in relation to gender-based violence.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact Dr. Margot Francis or the Research Ethics Office using the information provided below. Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

If you have questions about your rights as a research subject you may contact:

Principal Investigator:

Dr. Margot Francis
Women and Gender Studies/Sociology Department
Brock University
905-688-5550 ext. 5381
mfrancis@brocku.ca

Research Ethics Office

(905) 688 5550 x3035

reb@brocku.ca

This letter is yours to keep.

Appendix B: Consent Form

Consent Form:

I have read the Letter of Information and have had the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name: _____ **Email:** _____

(Participant – Print Name/email contact)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

(Participant -- Signature and date)

Signature: _____

(Participant Signature to Consent to audio recording of interview)

Pseudonym: _____

(Print pseudonym)

Print Name: Sign Sign _____ **Sign & Date:** _____

(Person obtaining consent – Print, date and sign name)

Appendix C: Ethics Clearance



Brock University
Research Ethics Office
Tel: 905-688-5550 ext. 3035
Email: reb@brocku.ca

Social Science Research Ethics Board

Certificate of Ethics Clearance for Human Participant Research

DATE: 7/19/2013

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: FRANCIS, Margot
Women's and Gender Studies

FILE: 12-289 - FRANCIS

TYPE: Masters Thesis/Project STUDENT: Stephen Soucie
SUPERVISOR: Margot Francis

TITLE: Engaging Men in Antiviolence Activism

ETHICS CLEARANCE GRANTED

Type of Clearance: NEW

Expiry Date: 7/31/2014

The Brock University Social Sciences Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above named research proposal and considers the procedures, as described by the applicant, to conform to the University's ethical standards and the Tri-Council Policy Statement. Clearance granted from 7/19/2013 to 7/31/2014.

The Tri-Council Policy Statement requires that ongoing research be monitored by, at a minimum, an annual report. Should your project extend beyond the expiry date, you are required to submit a Renewal form before 7/31/2014. Continued clearance is contingent on timely submission of reports.

To comply with the Tri-Council Policy Statement, you must also submit a final report upon completion of your project. All report forms can be found on the Research Ethics web page at <http://www.brocku.ca/research/policies-and-forms/research-forms>

In addition, throughout your research, you must report promptly to the REB:

- a) Changes increasing the risk to the participant(s) and/or affecting significantly the conduct of the study;
- b) All adverse and/or unanticipated experiences or events that may have real or potential unfavourable implications for participants;
- c) New information that may adversely affect the safety of the participants or the conduct of the study;
- d) Any changes in your source of funding or new funding to a previously unfunded project.

We wish you success with your research.

Approved:


Jan Frijters, Chair
Social Sciences Research Ethics Board

Note: Brock University is accountable for the research carried out in its own jurisdiction or under its auspices and may refuse certain research even though the REB has found it ethically acceptable.

If research participants are in the care of a health facility, at a school, or other institution or community organization, it is the responsibility of the Principal Investigator to ensure that the ethical guidelines and clearance of those facilities or institutions are obtained and filed with the REB prior to the initiation of research at that site.

Appendix D: Interview Guide

Theme I: Childhood

1. How did you become involved in basketball?

- a. What is your earliest basketball memory?*
- b. Is your family involved in sport?*

2. How has your participation in basketball as a youth influenced you?

- a. What did you learn about yourself?*
- b. What did you learn about others?*
- c. What was the best thing about playing basketball growing up?*
- d. What was the worst thing about playing basketball growing up?*

Theme II: Manhood

3. What does it mean to be a man?

- a. Where do these ideas come from?*
- b. Are there times or situations where what it means to be a man can change?*
- c. Do you feel your teammates or coaches would define manhood similarly?*

4. What do you like about being a man?

- a. What don't you like about being a man?*

5. What about the word "male"?

- b. What is the difference between sex and gender?*

6. Who is the strongest man you know?

- a. Why*

7. Describe your understanding of what it means to be a man?

- a. Are there qualities or characteristics that basketball has helped you to develop or strengthen?*
- b. Are there qualities or characteristics that you do not feel comfortable expressing to your coaches or teammates?*

Theme III: Athletic Culture

11. Describe to me the things you like about the athletic culture at the USO?

- a. Describe to me the things that you do not like about the athletic culture?*
- b. In what ways is the athletic culture at USO similar or dissimilar to your previous experiences?*

12. Describe to me your relationship with your teammates?

- a. How did this relationship develop?*
- b. In what ways is this relationship similar or dissimilar to your previous experiences?*
- c. How do you feel about the attitudes and behaviours of your teammates?*
- d. Do you feel pressure from your teammates to play a certain way?*
- e. Do you feel pressure from your teammates to act a certain way?*
- f. What do your teammates expect of you?*

13. Describe to me your relationship with your coaches?

- a. In what ways is this relationship similar or dissimilar to your previous experiences?*
- b. How do you feel about the attitudes and behaviours of your coaches?*
- c. Do you feel pressure from your coaches to play a certain way?*
- d. What do your coaches expect of you?*

14. Describe to me the things you like about the locker room?

a. In what ways is this locker room similar or dissimilar to your previous experiences?

Theme IV: Race

15. Have you seen or experienced racism in your basketball career?

- a. How did this make you feel?*
- b. How did you respond?*
- c. How did your teammates or coaches respond?*
- d. Do you feel that racism is prevalent in basketball? What about other sports?*

16. What assumptions are made about you because of your race?

- a. In the classroom, what assumptions are made about you because of your race?*
- b. In what ways has the label “student-athlete” influenced how peers and professors have treated you?*
- c. In your experience, are White student-athletes and Black student-athletes treated similarly?*
- d. In the community, what assumptions are made about you because of your race?*

Theme V: Women

17. Describe your team’s relationship with the women’s varsity basketball team?

- a. How was this relationship developed?*
- b. Do you feel that your teammates respect the women’s team?*

18. What are some of the dominant stereotypes regarding female athletes?

- a. Where do these ideas come from?*
- b. Are they representative of the female athlete that you know?*
- c. What effects might these labels have on young women and girls?*

19. How do you feel about coaches using language and phrases like “man up” or “don’t be a pussy” to motivate players?

a. Has the use of this language ever been challenged in the locker room?

b. Would you feel comfortable challenging a teammate or coach using this language?

20. Outside the locker room, how do your teammates talk about women?

a. Have you ever felt pressure from your teammates to treat women a certain way?

Wrap Up

21. Is there anything you would like to clarify or add?